dsignn

ACADEMY

WIT
ACADEMY

#photography #education #art #restoration #fashion #accessibility #design

Dear Readers!

The seventh issue of dsignn magazine opens a polyphonic discussion on contemporary design — its materiality, emotionality, and the constant intermingling of the physical and digital worlds. The authors of this issue's texts show how technology becomes a creative, educational, and cultural partner in the design process. From digital prototyping in fashion to reflections on the absent body in art, from conservation laboratories to empathetic universal design — this issue serves as a map of diverse explorations.

At the center of attention remains the Human: sensitivity, the need for participation, and the ability to reinterpret tradition. The articles reveal that contemporary design is not so much about creating objects as it is about building relationships — between the past and the future, between reality and imagination, between science and intuition.

A symbolic culmination of this issue is the exhibition "Light and Shadow, Emptiness and Fullness", in which black-and-white works become a metaphor for this delicate balance — between contrast and harmony, between presence and absence — that defines today's language of art and design. We wish you an enjoyable read!

Dsignn Editorial Team

Contents

"ROAD SIGNS IN LATGALE"

peer-reviewed
article

Aina Strode, PhD

Diāna Apele

Ineta Auzāne

Abstract

The search for historical landscape studies can be a fascinating and educational process, allowing one to learn about past events and their impact on today's landscape. While working on the research, the authors paid attention to various searches for historical landscape studies in order to best present the research topic, which is closely related to the historical landscape of Latgale.To address the issue of preserving the cultural and historical environment of Latgale, topics were collected and included in the photo album "ROAD SIGNS OF LATGALE." These include mailboxes, bus stops, bus stop signs, milk tables, movable road signs, crucifixes, haystacks, churches of Latgale, wooden houses, window decorations of houses, and people. The photo reports were created thematically, analyzing their visual and informational value.

When driving along the roads of Latgale, there are things that catch the eye. These are Latgale road signs in the literal and figurative sense. There are road signs that indicate the name of a place, a bus stop, etc. But isn't a road sign also a milk stand on the side of the road, a person, a mailbox, an old wooden house with openwork window decorations, a lake, a river, dead ash trees or an old oak tree with branches leaning over the road, a church, a bridge, a cemetery, an apple orchard, a blue tractor, a currant bush, a crucifix, a haystack and flowering bushes in the garden of an abandoned house?

Over time, a lot has changed. The rural landscapes of childhood memories were completely different. Now, driving along the road between hills and lakes, guest houses appear that usually do not fit into the landscape view and rebuilt old houses that have been deprived of the story of their beautiful windows. Then all that remains is

to say – yes, everything is ruined here – let's drive on, there is nothing to see here! Sad, but at the same time we can say that poverty in Latgale has given us the opportunity to keep many things authentic and unspoiled, because right around the bend in an overgrown apple orchard hides an old farmhouse with lacy window decorations, delicately glazed porch windows, proportional shapes of buildings. You can say that everything is as it should be – for real! But the house has no owner who knows how to appreciate and preserve it.

Many people think that everything that is old and decaying must be demolished. This is the wrong solution, because such houses exist only in Latgale! They can be saved, "canned", not touched, left for the future, because they do not bother anyone. The same can be said about many other things that we see while driving on the road. That is how the idea came to collect themes in photo stories to raise the issue of preserving the environment that bears historical testimony and to create a photo album.

The purpose of the research: to create a photo album about Latgale in order to raise the issue of environmental preservation, which bears historical evidence.

Research methods: theoretical – research of literature and Internet sources; empirical – observation, analysis of the data obtained in the study (photographs).

Research methodology
The study used theoretical and empirical research methods. Qualitative research is based on the analysis of data collected as a result of the observation method. Observation is a data collection method that allows analyzing the social world from the perspective of an external observer in order to test theories about phenomena and processes based on their manifestations and distribution. Unlike observation in everyday conditions, exploratory observation is more focused and systematic. The researcher must define what he wants to observe and how to record it. Open observation was used, which is defined as a type of observation that does not involve the use of pre-prepared topics or observation protocols, the researcher is guided only by the research questions he raises [1]. The authors conducted observations during photo fixation from March 2022 to February 2023. In 2024, the results of the study were compiled in the photo album "ROAD SIGNS IN LATGALE", the content and artistic value of the photographs was important during the photo selection stage. In turn, in 2025, the album will be published in paper format.

Research results
The quest for historical landscape research can be a fascinating and educational process that allows you to learn about past events and their impact on today's landscape. While working on the study, the authors paid attention to various quests for historical landscape research in order to best reveal the research topic, which is closely related to the historical landscape in Latgale.

Historical landscape research should begin with a study of literary sources. Libraries, archives and digital resources can be useful in this process. The authors of the work studied the literature to obtain information not only about the Latgale environment, but also to understand the relevance and importance of photo albums today. A study of historical books, documents and other literature related to the Latgale region and the creation of photo albums was carried out.

Visits to historical sites played an important role in the study of the historical landscape of Latgale. Visiting historical sites, such as museums, old towns, ancient castle ruins and other important landscape elements, gives the best idea of the place under study.

Pay attention to manors and castles. Manors and castle ruins are often well-preserved historical monuments. By studying their history and significance in the local context, you can learn a lot of necessary information about the environment and landscape under study. Also, by visiting archaeological excavations, you can see what has been discovered in the past and what way of life was in the past. It is important to talk to experts and locals. By contacting historians, museum staff, or locals, you can gain additional information about specific historical sites or events.

Nowadays, any research is unthinkable without exploring digital resources. When conducting research, one must examine digital archives, museum collections, and historical portals, where photographs, documents, and other materials can be examined.

The authors paid the greatest attention to territorial research trips in the development of the

study. Going to places related to historical landscapes allows for greater research, as it allows you to see and understand the landscape from a historical perspective. Trips are impossible to do without studying geographical and historical maps.

Maps help to understand how the landscape has changed over time and what historical factors have been.Many of these research methods were used by the authors in the development of their research, with the study of historical roads playing a significant role.

During the development of the research, while conducting research and photographing sections of roads, the authors often managed to find environmental objects that were later recognized in museum archives or private photo collections. In Figure 1, you can see a window from Biķernieki parish, a photograph of which is in the zudusilatvija.lv photo collection.

Looking at the 1st picture, you can see that, despite the fact that the pictures are different – one is in color and the other is in black and white, people tried to preserve the architectural element,

or window. Some time ago, it was painted, but the decorative board above the window has disappeared. It is precisely this kind of change that makes us think about our values, about preserving and cherishing them.

Developing a concept for a photo album theme

By obtaining extensive information about the history of photography, the peculiarities of the Latgale landscape, studying printing technologies and modern design trends, as well as gathering information about photo albums, it became clear what the concept of the new photo album should be. It should convey Latgalian warmth, both in terms of content and composition, creating the lost and remaining values of Latgale.

However, it should be understood that when developing a photo album for printing, various elements must be carefully considered to ensure that the final product is visually attractive, user--friendly and effectively conveys the intended message

Analyzing the information obtained, the authors of the study conclude that

Fig. 1 Window in the historical perspective
Source: left https://zudusilatvija.lv/objects/object/6954/ and to the right. Source: photo by I. Auzāne.

the influence of social media also played an important role in the photo album "ROAD SIGNS IN LATGALE". They helped to conduct not only empirical research, but also to understand how the social network viewer relates to various photographs that reflect the atmosphere characteristic of Latgale. This research helped to more seriously choose the list of topics to be published in the photo album.

Historical objects in the road landscape can make a diverse contribution to the travel experience and understanding of local culture. These objects can be both natural formations, such as ancient mounds, rivers or forests, and man-made, such as houses, farmsteads, churches, village remains or monuments. Historical objects can be a researcher's research topic, because in the modern Latgale road landscape, one can encounter a great many historical environmental objects.

Historic sites often serve as symbols of identity. They are associated with the local community and can be a source of pride in the history, art, and traditions of a region. These sites foster a connection between people and their cultural heritage. Historic sites play an important role not only in preserving culture and history [2], but also in enhancing the travel experience and providing an educational experience. Travelers have the opportunity to both enjoy visual and architectural beauty and gain a deeper understanding of the rich history and heritage of the region they are visiting.

Environmental features in the roadside landscape can offer interesting insights into the past and cultural heritage. Various roadside features or nearby landmarks are often linked to the history, traditions or significant events of the region. Some examples include:

- **Crucifixes** – Information is found on Internet resources that Latgale is the only region in Latvia where crucifixes are found outside of churches or residential premises. For example, the Latvian Wikipedia page about crucifixes states: "The crucifixes of Latgalian villages and roadsides are symbols of the Christian faith and objects of sacred art, which are most often found in Latgale on roadsides or crossroads [3]. "There was at least one crucifix in every village in Latgale, and in the largest ones even two: one at each end of the village. It was a unifier and a rallying point for people" [4]. This is how Wikipedia explains the crucifix (figs. 2, 3, 4).

- **House window decorations** – Architect Pēteris Blūms says that nowhere else in Latvia can you see the window decorations characteristic of Latgale. He points out their significance: "This is how communication takes place through the window – you see the world, the world sees you. Various ornamental signs, so-called amulets, are used in window decorations – for protection or to invoke favor from higher powers and also show the identity of the homeowner" [5]. During the observation, it was concluded that the window decorations (fig. 5, 6, 7, 8) are very diverse and that it is almost impossible to find two identical ones. Many windows do not have window shutters, many did not have them. The texture of the walls of wooden houses highlights the color of the window decorations that have faded in the sun, creating a picturesque

Fig. 2, 3, 4 Latgale road signs. Crucifixes. Road section Viški – Aglona, Grāveri – Okra. Source: photo by I. Auzāne.

mood and highlighting their shape. A precise rhythm of ornament and a graceful stylization of vegetation were seen in the decorations. When studying and photographing windows, one may want to recognize the handwriting of the masters. When photographing window decorations, it was concluded that a common style appears in windows at specific sections of the road. There is a pronounced variety of window decorations in cities, because in the post-war years many houses from different regions were transferred to the city.

- **Milk tables** – Milk tables are small architectural forms located on the sides of Latgale roads (fig. 9, 10). Despite their common function, a variety of

their forms was observed. Functionally, they can be used for transferring milk cans or for aesthetic pleasure. It was observed that reflectors are attached to several tables. Latgalian milk tables have attracted the attention of travelers. For example, Laura Melne, editor of the news website ReTV.lv, has described the recognition of the beauty and interestingness of milk tables on social media: "For several months now, you can follow the milk table gallery and stories on the social media Instagram account "@pina_golds". It is maintained by Latgalians Amanda Anusāne and Vizma Mičule. Mičule points out the features that make milk tables special: "First of all, the fact that a milk table cannot be bought ready-made in a store, there is no single standard for it. Each owner makes a milk table according to their individual "project" and available resources. Mostly the raw material is wood, but there are also various metal structures. If we look at the design of milk tables, then it is also a completely free flight of people's imagination – some milk tables are very minimalistic, others have some decorative elements. We have even seen a milk table with wood carvings! What makes milk tables even more special is that their time is numbered. In many places, milk tables are no longer used for milk delivery, because the milk machine takes milk "straight" from the milk house and the milk machines are equipped with a hose through which milk is pumped out of the cans, which no longer need to be placed on a platform – they can stand on the ground. Therefore, the main function of the milk table – a platform for convenient lifting of the can and pouring it into the machine's tank – is no longer needed. But we have noticed that many milk tables still serve as letterbox stands" [6].
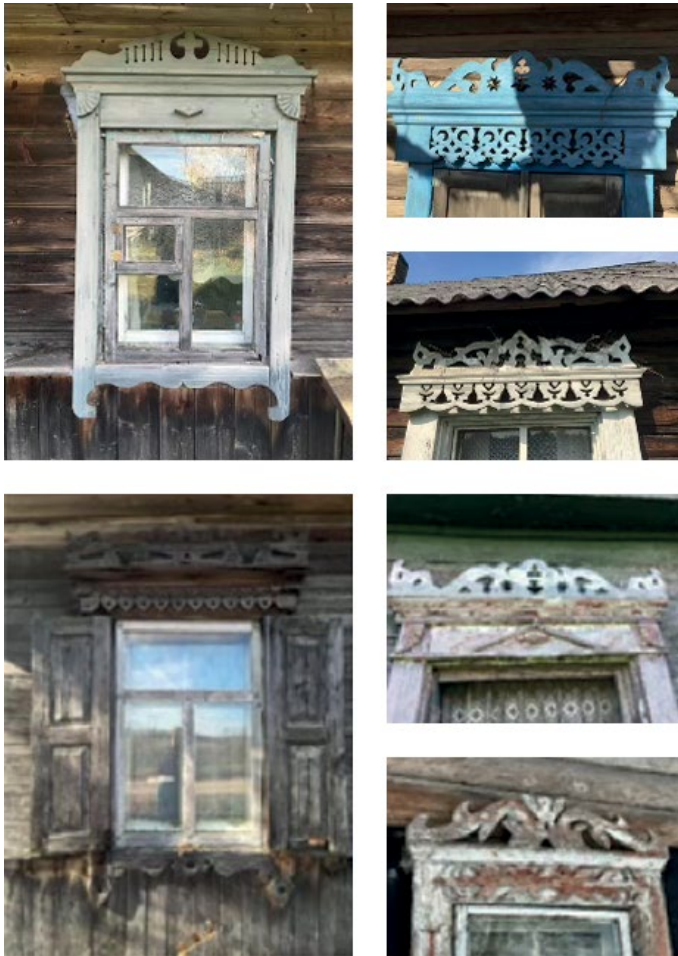
Fig. 5, 6, 7, 8 Latgale road signs. Window decorations. Source: photo by I. Auzāne.

Fig. 9, 10 Latgale road signs. Milk stalls. Road section Aglona – Dagda. Source: photo by I. Auzāne.

- **Haystacks** – Haystacks used to be an integral part of the Latvian landscape, but now they have become a rarity. Hay was traditionally stacked and dried in haystacks. Nowadays, hay is no longer placed in stacks. While driving, views of hay bales were observed – rhythmically arranged, chaotically arranged, packed and unpacked. Haystacks stacked in stacks were also seen (fig. 11, 12, 13). The topics examined are unique to each region of Latvia. We know that human activity differs in each region of Latvia, even in a county, because people's mentality is different. The authors of the study wanted to emphasize the special character of the Latgale region by examining the topics discussed above. They were included in the graphic design of the photo album and supplemented with other important topics.

Composition, color scheme and typeface graphic design for the photo album "ROAD SIGNS IN LATGALE"

Visual history, or visual history, is an approach that uses images, graphics, photographs, films, paintings, and other visual elements to understand and interpret the past. This approach offers the opportunity to see historical events and processes through visual materials, which can be a powerful way to deepen understanding of the past and promote emotional and sensory connections to historical events.

During the development of the project, I. Auzāne (one of the authors of the study) made more than 160 window photofixations. The page layout shows 144 window photos. As the authors of the study note, this is the most valuable asset during the development of the photo album. A window tells its own story about each house. It reflects its own unique mood. Each master, working on the design of the window, invested not only work, but also his soul, trying to make the window for a specific homeowner, thus making the building special. A photo collage of windows was also used in the design of the album cover (fig. 14).

The color scheme of the photo album is both bright and neutral. The page backgrounds are matched to the tonality of the photographs – highlighting or neutrally merging the photo collage into one image. The authors of the stu-

Fig. 11, 12, 13 Latgale road signs. Haystacks and hay bales. Road section Jaundome-Andzeļi. Source: photo by I. Auzāne.
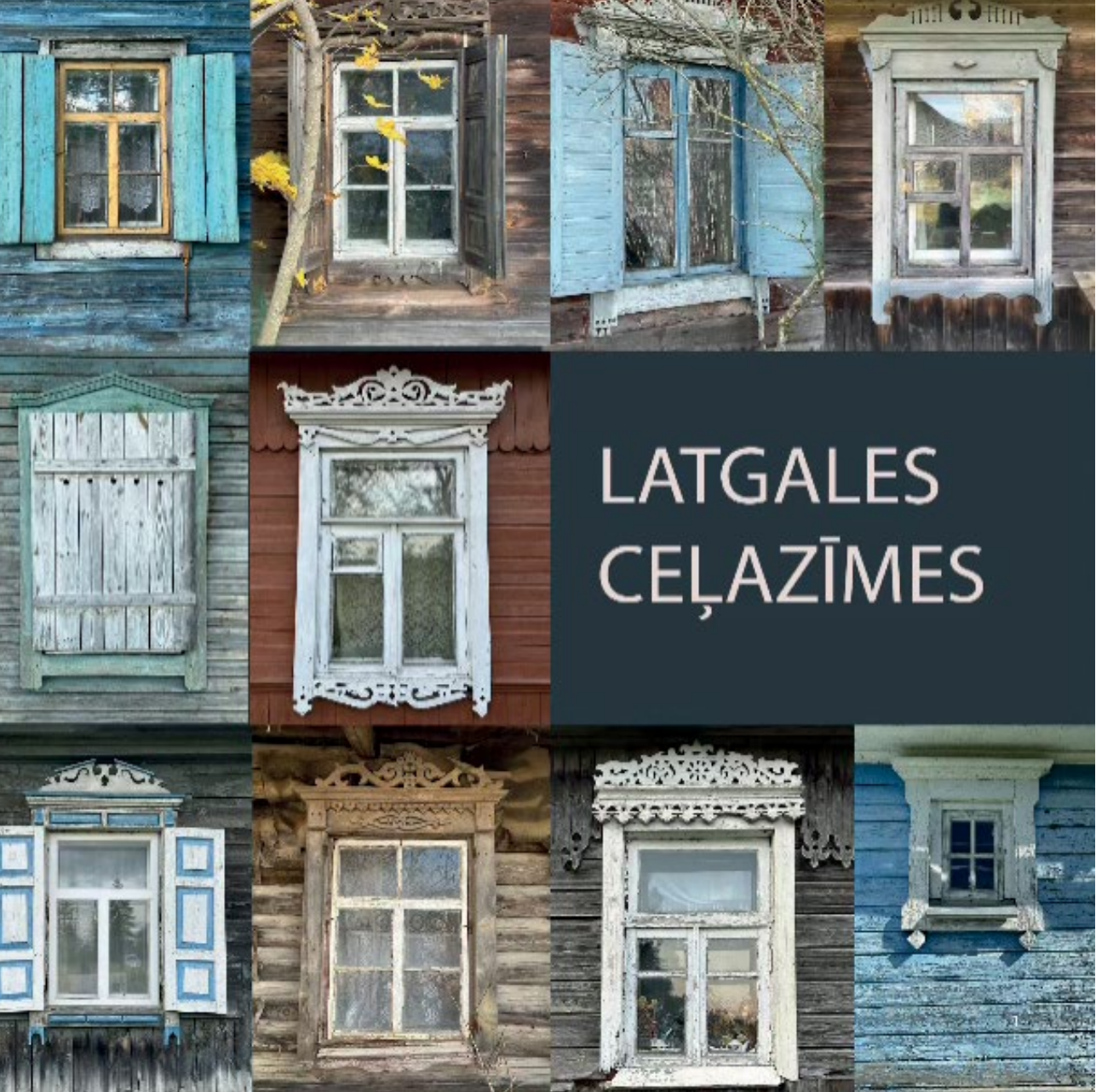
Fig. 14 Cover of the photo album "ROAD SIGNS IN LATGALE". The graphic design of the cover of the photo album is made up of a photo collage of windows. Design and photo by I. Auzāne.

dy aimed to highlight the content of the photograph, showing what is characteristic of the Latgale environment, therefore, based on the color scheme of the photographs, a basic tone was chosen that would accentuate the photographs in the page layout (fig. 15).

The use of text in the photo album is very conceptual. It is used in the annotation, table of contents, topic titles (fig. 16), and in the conclusion. The location of the objects is not indicated in the photo album in order to provide inspiration for travel and to find these

environmental objects on their own. The content of the photographs tells the Latgalian story in itself, therefore, the authors of the study decided to leave the photographs as the narrator (fig. 17). The topics and annotation are in Latgalian, which reinforces the authors' concept and the expression of Latgalianism in the photo album. The font style Hyphenate was chosen. It is laconic, unobtrusive, and simple. The authors believe that this font choice will further emphasize the main character of the photo album – the photograph.
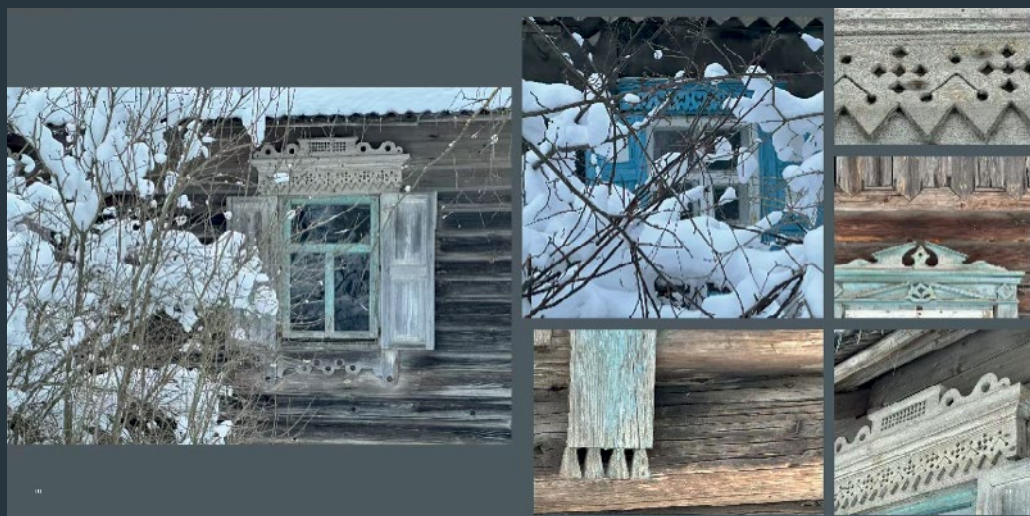
Fig. 15 The color scheme of the pages of the photo album "ROAD SIGNS IN LATGALE". Design and photo by I. Auzāne.

SĀTA
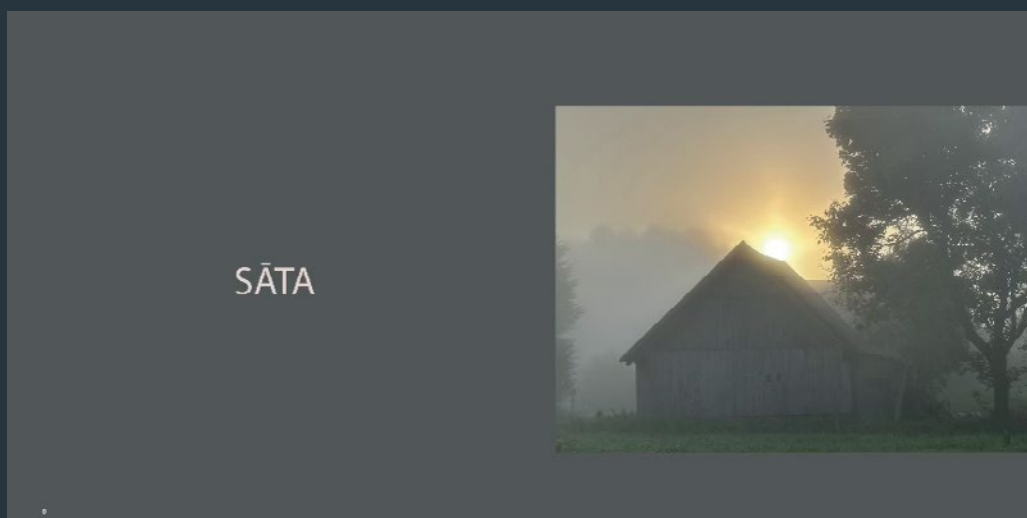
Fig. 16 Layout of the photo album "ROAD SIGNS IN LATGALE" for the chapter "Home" I. Design and photo by I. Auzāne.
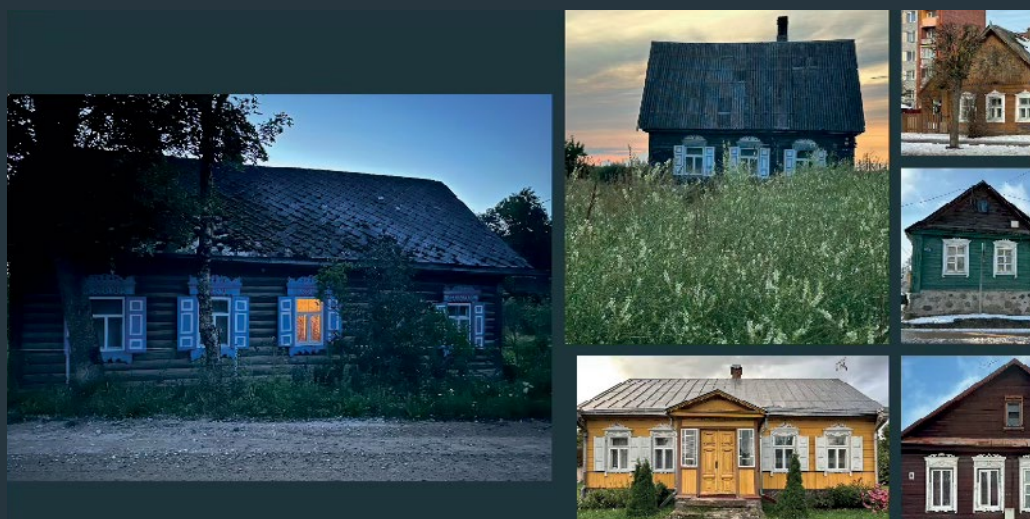
Fig. 17 Layout of the photo album "ROAD SIGNS IN LATGALE" for the chapter "Home" II. Design and photo by I. Auzāne.

In the photo album layouts, you can see the placement of photographs on the page area (fig. 15, 16, 17, 18). Photographs are placed in a collage or one by one. The edge of some photographs is composed to the edge of the page, thus creating the impression of spaciousness in the photo album layout.

The size of the photo album is 23x23 cm. The square page composition allowed to place the photographs in such a way that they are well visible to everyone interested. A photo album of this format is easy to hold in your hands and flip through the pages. Based on the development of the layout and the printout of the pilot edition, the authors concluded that this is a very successful size for a photo album.

Conclusions

In order to highlight the issue of preserving the cultural and historical environment in Latgale, topics were collected and included in the photo album "ROAD SIGNS IN LATGALE". These are mailboxes, bus stops, bus stop signs, milk tables, moving road signs, crucifixes, haystacks, Latgale churches, wooden houses, house window decorations, and people. Photo stories were created by topic, analyzing the visual and informative value of the topic.

Analyzing the work undertaken, it was concluded that, after researching social networks, publications and publications, the topics envisaged in the work are relevant. Photo stories can be used as teaching material when learning the history of Latgale, as the information will be visual and memorable.

During the research process, new topics will be created, for example – road bridges; rivers and lakes; old country house gardens; large trees; cemeteries; beaver mischief on the roadsides; road ditches; clay buildings; bathhouses; benches by old houses on the roadside, etc., as well as existing topics will be supplemented and developed. ∎

Aina Strode, PhD
Diāna Apele
Ineta Auzāne
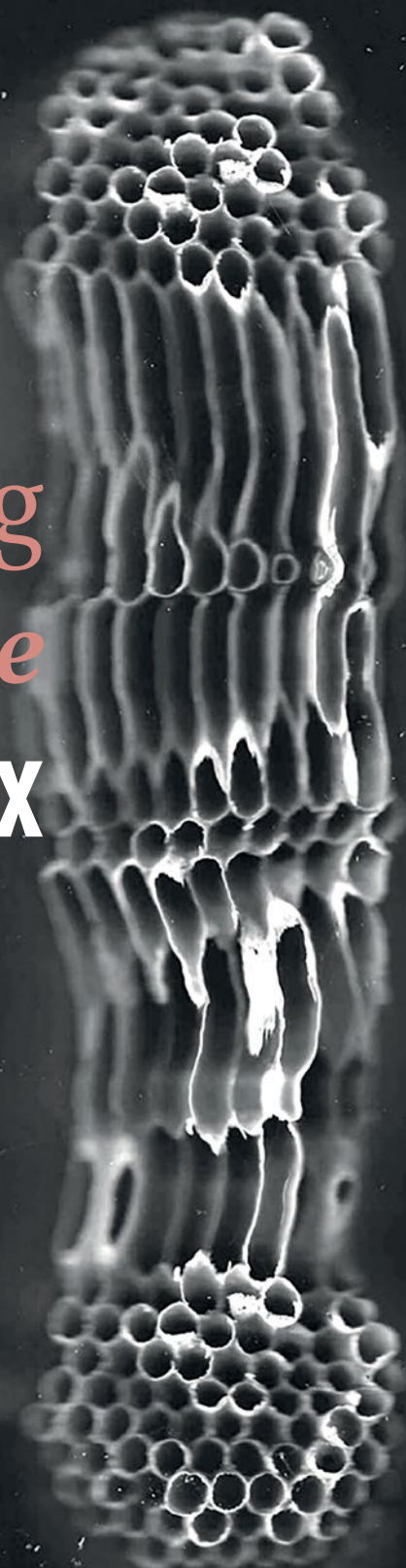
Bibliography

1. Novērošana, Elektroniskais resurss, b.g.
   [access: https://www.rsu.lv/petniecibas-terminu-vardnica/noverosana]
2. Vilcāne V., Kultūras pieminekļa īpašnieka priekšrocības un ierobežo-
   jumi, 2014, [access: https://lvportals.lv/skaidrojumi/260261-kulturas-
   -pieminekla-ipasnieka-prieksrocibas-un-ierobezojumi-2014]
3. Latgales ciemu un ceļmalu krucifiksi, b.g. [access: https://lv.wikipe-
   dia.org/wiki/Latgales_ciemu_un_ce%C4%BCmalu_krucifiksi]
4. Latkovskis L., Acta Latgalica 2, 1968, [access: https://lv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krucifikss]
5. Viļums J., Katrā Latgales pilsētā var atrast pa kādai koka arhitektūras pēr-
   lei, 2021, [access: https://www.la.lv/katra-latgales-pilseta-var-atrast-pa-ka-
   dai-koka-arhitekturas-perlei-ludza-ta-ir-vecaka-sinagoga-baltija]
6. Melne L., Instagram kontā apkopo piena galdu fotogrāfijas un stāstus, 2022, [access:
   https://www.retv.lv/raksts/instagram-konta-apkopo-piena-galdu-fotografijas-un-stastus]

Fig. 18 Layout of the photo album "ROAD SIGNS IN LATGALE" for the chapter "Window". Design and photo by I. Auzāne.

Stepping *Outside* the Box

On Work with Students and Generative Photography Going Astray

Justyna Staśkiewicz-Jonak, PhD

Abstract

The article undertakes the topic of contemporary digital photography in the context of teaching and artistic practice. The author focuses on the importance of tradition – from Jan Bułhak to Władysław Strzemiński – and the role of classic compositional categories (rhythm, perspective, structure). She points to the need of emphasising the conscious formation of visual narration in the teaching process – encompassing both experiments involving means of expression, and the ability to benefit creatively from the richness of the predecessors' oeuvre. The dissimilarity of digital photography as such as well as generative digital photography has been emphasised, with attention paid to the value of the source image and the importance of work experience in independent processing of the photographic material. The article indicates that the photography education requires students to step outside the box, to individualise topics and have in-depth contact with the artistic tradition, which constitutes a foundation for the creative independence of future photographers.

#digital photography #photographic art #photography education #one-point perspective #composition #generative art #source image #art education

Contemporary digital photography has been developing in various aspects. It follows the demand for various types of documentation, creates illustrations for articles in daily newspapers, information publications, publications on fashion etc. Human curiosity is also a driver for image hunters, travelling the world in search of reportage, sensation, illustration. In their first steps, a photography student involuntarily imitates popular poses and compositions, stereotypes, or fashion icons. There is nothing wrong with that, it is natural for visual arts to learn through watching and imitation. Specific, familiar shots may seem desirable, particularly at the beginning they are more interesting than a search for new presentations. Stepping outside the box requires effort.

Jan Bułhak introduced the term "photographic art" as an artistic, well-thought-out form of photography; Based on his criteria, digital photographic art is distinguished today from digital, generative or analog graphics inspired by photography.

Can digital photographic art be considered art? Much less often than graphics, sculpture or painting. The difference stems from the nature of the tool; photography, in its basic and common application, is by definition imitative, whereas painting, graphics, sculpture by their very nature require mechanical transposition of observation into gesture, which necessarily requires individuality and at the same time guarantees it. If we understand art as a language of processing sensory data into metaphor, for example a visual one, we can try to apply certain "gradation": the more consciously the object referred to as the "work of art" is created, the more knowledge and thought (understanding of technical aspects, historical or cultural contexts, etc., and our own relationship to it) is involved by the artist in the process of creation, and the more the work is "artificial" and "creative" and less "imitative". In a digital darkroom we can obtain photographic prints with a very interesting spectrum of artistic effects (solarisation, cyanotype, tritone, exposing the negative in the analogue meaning of this word). New styles in digital photography often stem from a fascination with digital darkroom tools. As in any field of art, it is also necessary here to avoid schematism and subordination to the algorithm.

Magdalena Laskowska Photograph taken during the Digital Photography Workshop under the supervision of Justyna Staśkiewicz-Jonak, PhD

It is impossible not to include artificial intelligence in these musings. It is very alluring, it is the "enchanted pencil*" of our times, but its properties are imitative and predictable, maybe it is perceived similarly to photography at its beginnings? Its charm lies in the returns to well-known motifs. By definition, it feeds on what has already existed. In the creative photography education, however, the emphasis is on the need to formulate individual and reliable narratives providing tools to go beyond the "database" – to understand the mechanisms that build it and allow for the creation of something new, albeit embedded in a broad cultural context.

Digital photographic art, freed from the obligation to record everything, may rely on such graphic foundations as rhythm, perspective, structure, and composition. In other words, regard-

less of the simplicity or complexity of an image, grammatical or semantic narrative enclosed within the framework of the composition should appear. Distributing compositional weight and zooming in or out of the frame are just some of the elements of the canon of image building taken into account by contemporary masters of this medium.

There are many different artistic aspects of photography and the talents necessary to perform it are also different. For example, there is constant demand for portrait photography. A professional portrait session requires tact and sensitiveness from both parties, especially the photographer. The psychological element is very important, working together can involve crossing personal boundaries, therefore clear understanding between the model and the photographer is necessary. These

problems become even more complicated during the production of a reportage in which the ethical element plays a very important role. There are photographic talents focusing on the gesture, individuality, creation. Some artists can build tension and record events in an intriguing way, and others mainly concentrate on structure.

Working with students

The digital photography education carries many challenges. This very popular, accessible and dynamically developing medium is the younger sister of analogue photography. The core is seemingly the same, but their comparison makes it impossible not to notice how easy it is to master the handing of a digital camera in terms of theory and technological aspects. This generates unprecedented interest in taking photographs which record various aspects of life. Also, memory banks in which photographs exist only in a digital form make you lazy. A serious challenge appears on top of the preparation for and taking the photograph, as well as the processing of the digital file – preparing students to select the appropriate medium to preserve the given work. We have a huge historic heritage at our disposal here, both in the field of photography and printing.

The ubiquitous screen limits the creator and deprives the average user of the opportunity to explore the plastic boundaries of the image. Therefore, when working with students, I take a great care to ensure that they consciously build the correct pattern.

Drawing a clear demarcation line between digital photographic art and graphics that use photography is a difficult task. This line is determined in teaching practice, during the analysis of the stylistic and technical activities accompanying the process of transforming a photographic image. It is the more difficult considering that contemporary photographic nomenclature contains multiple paradoxes. Previously, a "negative" was – as the name suggests – the reverse of the image. Today, a "digital negative" is a file that contains detailed data from a recorded image that goes far beyond the scope of what can be captured in a photograph. "Aperture," contrary to its literal meaning, refers to the degree of exposure of the lens. Decisions made during the editing process in graphics programs involve consciously selecting setting profiles and many other effects to align with the well-known canons of contemporary photography.

In the teaching process, I introduce students to issues connected with the concept of contemporary photographic art in a systematic way, referring among other things to Jan Bułhak's theory. The basic, smallest element that builds the image on the photographic film is film grain, and the basic medium of digital photographic art is a pixel. Thanks to their uniqueness, pixels carrying information about digital recording are more valuable for us than those generated artificially (even by the best algorithms); having the original information, we can use it consciously to build an artistic statement, skilfully differentiating it. The lack of this source information means that we are dealing with a meaningless mass in the literal sense of this term. If, therefore, we can use the source recording, we trim the excess information to convey only the information most important for the student and their artistic concept. This is only possible where the initial information resource is complete; then we have things to give up.

In a photographic studio, access to tethering has reduced the distance between the recording and the visualisation of an image. It is possible to almost immediately correct compositional, technical and lighting errors. We can quickly guide the student through observing the changing light on the set, and thus the changing composition. The input image is modified on the set and discussed then and there. The student can skip the previously hours-long process from the exposure to viewing the result in the form of a print. This apparent ease creates new, particularly important requirements for the theoretical and practical preparation of a student for the photographic representation of a given artistic problem.

Multipoint light measurement systems, increasingly improved matrices, previews on camera screens, a tracking system for selected elements – all this allows for increasingly precise and faster intervention in the photographic process. Never before in the history of photography has it been so easy to verify the technological correctness of a photograph.

The greatest difficulties arise from the nature of knowing and understanding both the semantic and structural nature of an image. The perception of a human eye is complicated. These processes have been described very aptly by Władysław Strzemiński in his "Vision Theory" ("Teoria widzenia") through the analysis of an image combining several perspectives in a single composition.

To follow the processes of perception at least a little, you can use multi--exposure, which is one of the tools for superposition (overlaying) subsequent images and modifying the one-point perspective (another way to solve this problem is collage). Conscious viewing of a photograph can also begin from the direction in which details are traced in the composition: moving from focusing on details to the overall impression of taking in the whole. This human ability to work with the eye while creating an image concept is unique, very different from technical recording, and, depending on the concept, it can help shape new worlds. Then comes the stage of working with aperture, distance, and depth of field adjustment.

A characteristic feature of photography is the recording of one-point perspective, first described in the Renaissance and achieved through the use of a camera obscura. This perception of perspective, intertwined with the camera since the invention of optical tools, is being reassessed. Its artistic utility sparked heated debates (including denial of its value) as early as the Renaissance. In the photography education, optical tools deforming the classic one-point perspective are used deliberately. This approach allows students to recognize that the traditional model of vision is not an objective representation of reality, but rather a convention that can be modified and critically analyzed. Students practice using smartphones equipped with dedicated lenses, creating visual images very close to those from centuries ago. Dynamic compositions captured this way justify the loss of quality resulting from the use of generative tools (a smartphone with a dedicated wide-angle lens, a fisheye lens, a random lens, or other algorithms that refract lenticular optical vision). By conducting these creative experiments, we engage students in a discourse that was began by van Eyck and continued by artists such as de Chirico and Escher. We compare the results of our experiments with similar ones known from the history of art: similarity enables us to find the criteria, knowing the criteria enables us to then consciously select more advanced photographic tools and photo processing.

Metamorphosis, transformation, nonlinearity of image. Visual puzzle

As I have indicated before, experimental methods used in the process of creative development prove that even a simple change in the focal length of the lens affects the vanishing point, which can lead to the deliberate creation of an image. The diversity of perspectives in photographic practice constitutes a significant teaching potential. In this context, the teacher plays the role of a guide, indicating directions of research and stimulating experiments. When the person recording the image is highly sensitive and ensures appropriate technical parameters, even an image from a smartphone can provide valuable artistic impressions. Something as concise as a pixel can inspire a statement in another medium, as exemplified by Gerhard Richter's stained-glass window in the Cologne Cathedral, inspired by pixels, which recalls a far-reaching suprematist "hunt" for the right composition of rectangles.

In digital photography (it should be distinguished from ordinary "digital recording"), it assumes the artist's participation in the creation of images and preparation for taking the photo. In the teaching process, a distinction is made between the initial file and the workshop print and interpretation of the photograph. Given that the algorithms were written based on the actual tools of a photographer's work, we create a useful commentary on the optical darkroom program.

In the teaching process, compositional exercises with rhythm and perspective are used because these issues will be found in the future workspace of a professional graphic designer using

photography. Photography fosters the exploration of one's own ideas. However, viewing and studying the masterpieces of photography and painting masters are important to acquire and deepen one's understanding of the history of imaging, and thus find a place for digital photography in contemporary art.

The ability to find light and moments worth capturing in everyday life is an important issue. It has been emphasised that the deepening of the perspective in creating a photographic image and its contents remains closely connected with the author's experiences. This phenomenon is defined by the principle of projection, so aptly described by Prof. Ernst Gomrich in his book "Art and Illusion" ("Sztuka i złudzenie"). It is common knowledge that the experience gained in itself does not influence the type of image recorded, and it is only the provocation of thematic work, work on capturing the subject in a digital image that leads to the image and actions taken beyond the ordinary understanding of photography. Focusing on these principles does not mean neglecting portraiture, reportage, or sociological recording. It simply shifts the focus to other issues, less connected with acting-directing aspects. The act of taking a single photograph in a portrait or reportage requires additional consideration of anthropological and psychological issues, and may interact with the work of set designers, lighting directors, and makeup artists.

In the teaching process, compositional exercises with rhythm and perspective are used because these issues will be found in the future workspace of a professional graphic designer using photography. Photography fosters the exploration of one's own ideas. However, viewing and studying the masterpieces of photography and painting masters are important to acquire and deepen one's understanding of the history of imaging, and thus find a place for digital photography in contemporary art.

In contrast to generative photography, digital photography captures light here and now, it is a barometer of its intensity, it positions objects in space in a continuous way. Generative photography, on the other hand, calculates the relations between spots and proposes specific sequences of them, making (indeed, increasingly rare) mistakes in processing objects as obvious and beautiful as hair, hands, and intricate structures for which it is unable to select the right sequences of elements. These are completely different, yet seemingly coexisting, issues. It is an interesting experience to compare photos taken with a DSLR and a smartphone. The apparent sharpness and extraordinarily attractive color vibrancy achieved in smartphone photos are strikingly captivating to the layperson. But are their bright and seemingly attractive forms truly the modern, important image? A question arises: what is important when the attractive form of photos taken by smartphone cameras and similarly high-quality equipment owes its effect almost exclusively to algorithms, not the mechanical capabilities of the camera?

With a little effort, photos taken with a modern SLR or mirrorless camera possess a subtle sense of space and authenticity. They don't pose the same cumbersome demands as traditional analog photography, but they still rely on certain technical limitations that allow for a more conscious depiction of reality. Generativity often offers smooth planes packed with similar sequences of pixels. This is quite a significant drawback: even in drawing lessons, we place great emphasis on varying strokes in light and shadow, as this leads to the creation of the illusion of space. Excessive repetition and mechanicalness are perceived negatively, depriving the artist of variety and impoverishing the expression

An untrained eye, on a daily basis drawn to short-form content on social media (e.g., Instagram reels), has no chance of developing broader aesthetic patterns. The monotony of visual stimuli causes the viewer to miss the opportunity to notice the subtleties and nuances of imagery. The simplicity of the message and the obviousness of generativity are highly suggestive and dominant. Thus,

learning how to build artistic vision becomes particularly important in the teaching process.

The graininess of an image as well as the intriguing, original distribution of pixels constitute a significant aesthetic value, while their excessive arrangement can be perceived as unnatural, suggesting a raster element introduced by artificial intelligence. This is where new graphic horizons open and close. With an emphasis on "close", because regular use of the generative standard, as any mechanical unilateral experience, restricts the future adept of the craft and unites them with the shapeless crowd. The joy of being able to choose how to observe the light and the shooting plan constitutes an educational value imparted to students.

Smartphone photography, on the other hand, can serve as a sketch in photographic work. These types of preliminary projects foster more efficient and conscious use of the digital camera. However, they require determination not to replace artistic practice in which a deeper creative process is expected. Photographs taken with a smartphone are excellent as "kick-start" images which may be taken, analysed and abandoned so that you can embark on a true journey of photographic expression.

Even just two months of work on a frame allows for a more interesting depiction of the space. The myth of inspiration replaced by the constant provocation of encountering an image brings results, but when it comes to building the final complex image, the simplified set of data from a smartphone turns out to be too poor. This example shows both strengths and limitations of contemporary digital photography. They are also expressed in the paradox of manuality. However, despite the difficulties caused by the manual adjustment, we know that experiencing such work is invaluable to developing the ability to decide what is important. Based on this, the user shapes their own manual preferences in the camera. This enables conscious pursuit of graphic and compositional values, so characteristic of the diverse artistic trends of 20th-century photography, so aptly described by Urszula Czartoryska.

Magdalena Laskowska Photograph taken during the Digital Photography Workshop under the supervision of Justyna Staśkiewicz-Jonak, PhD

The artistic vision in the area of photographic activities is also expanded by the treatment of a single photograph as an element of a mosaic and allowing for randomness and other activities related to the author's concept. The content of experimental and creative photography visible among other things in the axial and mirror compositions of Roman Cieślewicz, in the intriguing juxtapositions of Hockney's multi-photographs, or in the photographic works of Zofia Kulik, constitute important points of reference in the process of artistic education. As eminently original works, based on the artist's conscious, original decision, they encourage individual exploration, as opposed to simply copying a work. They demonstrate the value of asking questions and formulating original interpretations of issues present in the studio.

In teaching practice, it is noticed that such diverse, but always conscious ways of treating photography inspire well-thought-out visions, which then penetrate even the "second circulation", including the kitsch filling the space of photography, including student photography, which is the main area of reference. The greater the emphasis we place on the individualisation of topics and subjective photographic preferences at the level of inspiration and education, the greater the diversity of documentation of aesthetic exploration, and also the greater the value of teaching in the educational process. This way the unavoidable repetitive nature of a large part of work generated in academic settings gains individual, noble features constituting the foundations of future professional independence of students. ∎

Justyna Staśkiewicz-Jonak, PhD

Bibliography

1. Bułhak J., "Fotografika, Zarys fotografii artystycznej", Trzaska Evert i Michalski S.A., Warsaw 1931.
2. Czartoryska U., "Przygody plastyczne fotografii", Wydawnicta Artystyczne i Filmowe, Warsaw 1965.
3. Gombrich E.H. J., "Sztuka i złudzenie. O psychologii przedstawienia obrazowego", Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 1981.
4. Hockney D., Gayford M., "Historia Obrazów", Dom Wydawniczy Rebis, Poznań 2016.
5. Strzemiński W., "Teoria Widzenia", Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi, 2016.
6. Tomaszczuk Z., "Łowcy obrazów: szkice z historii fotografii", Centrum Animacji Kultury, Warsaw 1998.
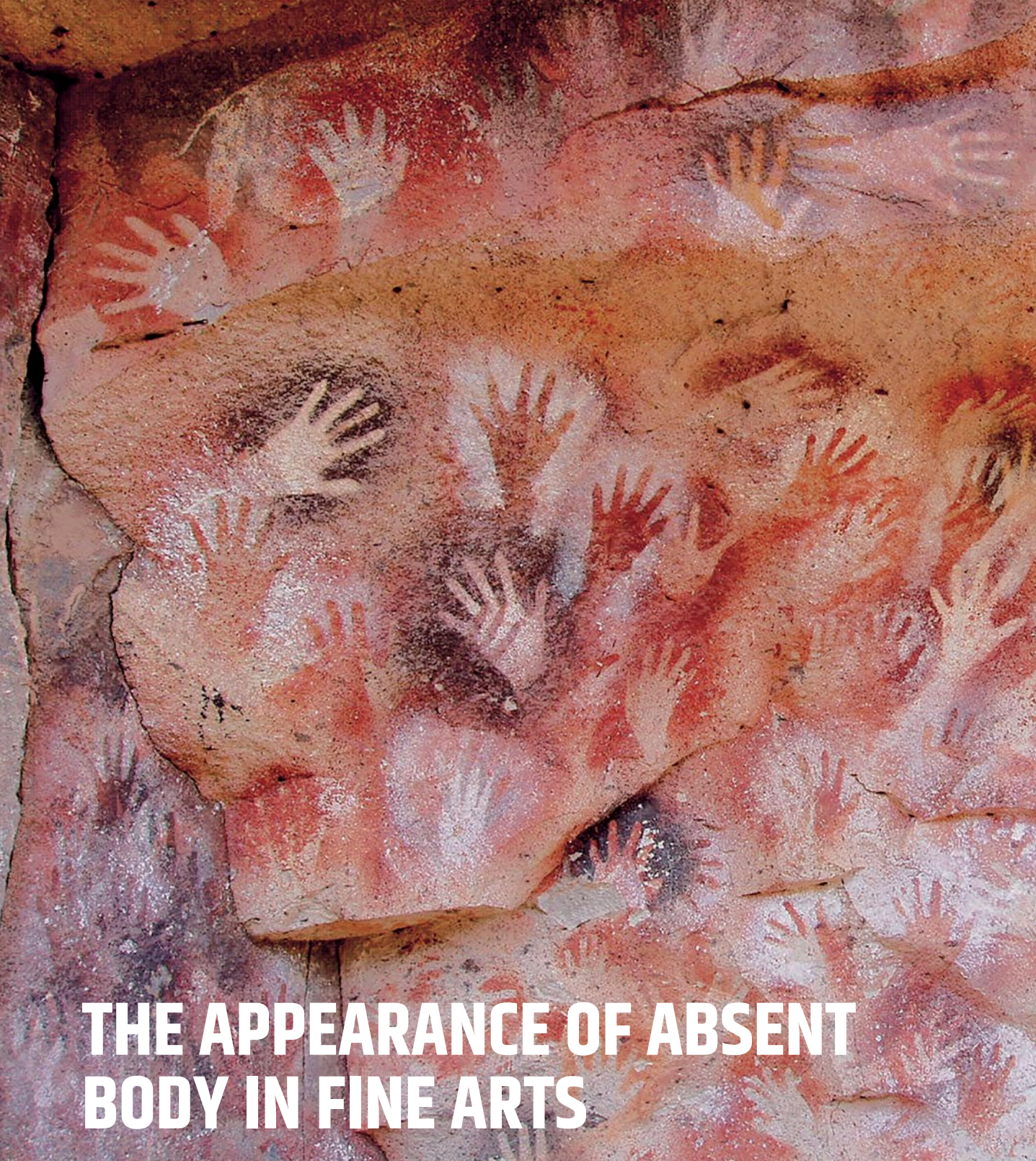
THE APPEARANCE OF ABSENT BODY IN FINE ARTS

#absent body #fine arts #phenomenology #semiotics

Fig. 1 Cueva de la Manos (Argentina) was created in several waves between 7,300 BC and 700 AD. Ancient example of Absent body in Patagonian region. Cueva de las Manos – is named for the hundreds of hand paintings stenciled into multiple collages on the rock walls. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cueva_de_las_Manos#/media/File:SantaCruz-Cueva-Manos-P2210651b.jpg

Tamara Pathak

peer-reviewed
article

Abstract
The article examines the concept of the Absent body in fine art, based on semiotic, phenomenological and imaginative theories. The Absent body is defined as one that is not re-presented directly, but is experienced through signs, traces or the context of personal experience. The works of artists are discussed, in which the body becomes an invisible but tangible presence. The role of the viewer in the creation of meanings and the "filling in" of the imaginary body through the mechanisms of interpretation and imagination is emphasized. In this way, the imaginary body emerges as a phenomenal case in the context of visual art, based on the hypotheses and concepts of artists, significant philosophers, and theorists.

The phenomenon of the Absent body in fine arts emerges as an interesting and multi-layered question in the field of art, connecting aesthetic perception, reflection of physicality and the imagination of the viewer. Although the body as a representational or visual object has existed in art since the earliest historical periods, this article examines precisely that form of the body that is not directly depicted, but is experienced through hints, signs, traces, appearances of Absent body.

This concept, closely related to the mechanisms of imagination, suggests reconsidering the boundaries of artistic perception – what is seen but not depicted, what is experienced without a direct image of the body. Maurice Merleau-Ponty emphasizes that "Our body is our perspective on the world, and the incomplete intentional and horizontal structure of perception is not a limitation to our access to the world and truth; it is the very possibility of this access." [1]. Thus, the phenomenon of the Absent body allows the artist and the viewer to meet in a common space of imagination.

The aim of this article is to analyze the concept of the Absent body through examples of visual art, based on contemporary philosophical and aesthetic theories, highlighting the role of the viewer in the "filling" of the body and the experience of the work.

Methods

The appearance of the Absent body in Fine arts is studied using the case study method, which aims to thoroughly analyze the phenomenon of the Absent body in the context of visual art, to explain the phenomenon under study using artistic research. The article does not cover a very wide field of the Absent body as an object of research and is mainly focused on the definition of the phenomenon, the results of artistic research, interactions with other artistic cases, known examples in artistic field as well as in some theories and philosophies of art.

Results

The Absent body, as a case of artistic expression in the visual arts, expands the boundaries of body perception and emphasizes the conceptual possibilities of the body. The artistic experiments carried out have highlighted the diversity of possibilities and recognition of transferred idea, the implemented artwork *no(BODY)* marks one of the cases of the Absent body, which uses the method of imprint, trace. *No(BODY)* works as a signifier as a communicative terms, and the extracted signified maintains the "openness" of the work. By keeping the artwork "open", it can be interpreted and rethought, otherwise the work becomes an interpretation of the artist's thought.

This artistic research is relevant due to the topic of body representation, based on art history, and focused on the conceptual possessions of the imaginary body. The research identifies cases of the imaginary body in visual art as an important phenomenon. It also defines its concept and theoretical and philosophical meanings. As the research reveals, manifestations of the imaginary body have been found since prehistoric times, but the number of works with the imaginary body has increased significantly with the rise of postmodernism and conceptual art.

The phenomenon of the imaginary body has not received enough attention and has not been extensively studied yet. The artistic research conducted proves that only an artist can do what theorists and philosophers talk about in the case of the imaginary body, i.e. create the final version of the work in the viewer's mind, convincing them that it is more real than what is seen in pictures – when the body is depicted directly.

The research "The appearance of Absent Body in Fine arts" is limited to a rather narrow and niche case of body representation. The research used notable works and artistic experiments that could be associated with the methodology of the sign or imprint.

Discussion
Human Body in Traditional Art

The human body is one of the oldest and most widely recurring motifs in the history of art. However, its representations, functions, and symbolic meanings have shifted considerably depending on the era, culture, and ideolo-

Fig. 2 Tamara Pathak. No(BODY) 2023-2025. The print of the body was made on lytography stones to inscribe the meaning of connection of artist's body and stone. Source: author's own artwork..

gical or aesthetic transformations. In many historical contexts, the body was not primarily a vehicle of emotional expression, but rather a bearer of ideas, spirituality, and symbolic order. For instance, in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, the human form was stylized according to strict canons, serving religious and political functions by expressing hierarchy, divinity, and cosmic order rather than individuality or naturalism [2, 3]. Similarly, in Early Christian and Byzantine art, corporeality was subordinated to spiritual meaning: the body of Christ or the saints was often depicted frontally and hieratically, with symbolic rather than naturalistic proportions, emphasizing transcendence and conveying theological truths [4]. By contrast, Islamic art generally avoided figural representation of the human body altogether, privileging the abstract, the ornamental, and the calligraphic sign as vehicles of divine presence [5]. Thus, the body in traditional art often functioned less as expression of individuality or emotion, and more as a codified sign through which ideas, beliefs, and hierarchies were articulated.

From Antiquity's idealized bodies to the Renaissance celebration of proportion and harmony, and into the Baroque period, the role of the body shifted again. In the paintings of Peter Paul Rubens, for example, the baroque concept of corporeality is expressed through fleshy, dynamic, and monumental figures, which are not merely eroticized nudes but carriers of mythological, religious, and political narratives. Yet it would be misleading to separate Rubens's depictions entirely from sensuality: in the Baroque, eroticism and cultural narrative

were intertwined, and the vitality of the body was itself part of the symbolic force [6]. In modernity, Édouard Manet's Olympia (1863) radically destabilized the passive image of the female nude by presenting a confrontational gaze, whereby the body became an active subject of social and artistic discourse [7]. Gustave Courbet's The Origin of the World (1866) pushes this further: while often interpreted as a symbol of birth and the source of life, the work cannot be detached from sexuality and erotic provocation. Its realism challenges the idealized beauty of tradition, yet the intimate depiction of female anatomy simultaneously invokes erotic desire—hence its enduring controversy and ambiguous status between philosophical sign and sensual image [8].

In contemporary art, the body assumes even more diverse forms: fragmented, transformed, sometimes disappearing altogether to leave only traces or

Fig. 3 É. Manet's "Olympia" (1863). As highly controversial and revolutionary oil painting mainly because of woman's direct and challenging gaze at the viewer was seen as confrontational and disrespectful of traditional artistic conventions. Source: https://www.britannica.com/topic/Olympia-painting-by-Manet

Fig. 4 Elena Antanavičiūtė. "Dewlap" 2021. While depicting the body artist see interesting abstract forms, she portrays body parts what are not much exploited in the media. As a part of Elena's approach to the body is detemined not only my her debate with beauty standarts, but also by individual aesthetic pursuits. Source: author's own artwork..
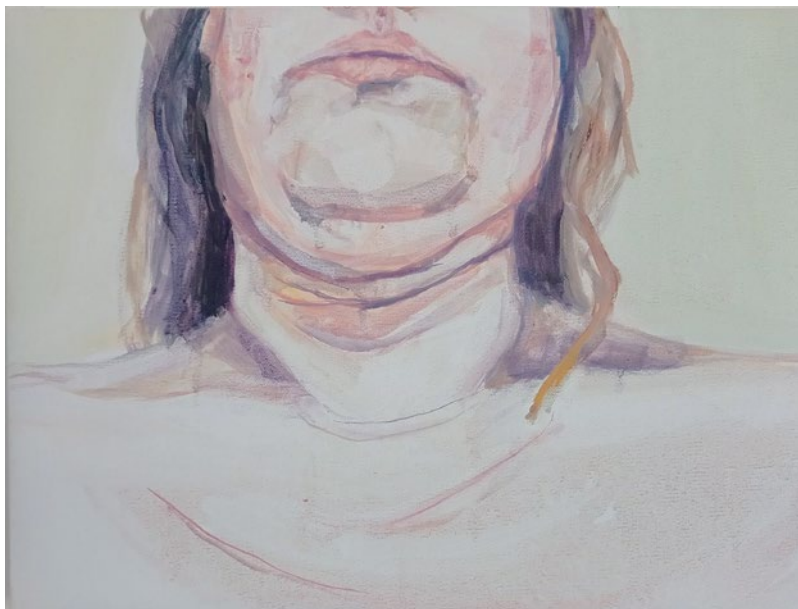
signs. The "absence" of the body becomes a conceptual form of expression tied not only to materiality, but also to memory, experience, and social context. As Herschdorfer observes, "the body is no longer only an image to be seen but an idea to be performed or evoked" [9]. This tendency is also visible in the current practices of Lithuanian artists: for instance, in Elena Antanavičiūtė's exhibition In the Body, the corporeal form becomes both an object of research and a subjective material of experience, while in Tamara Pathak's work, the body often withdraws from direct representation, transforming into systems of signs and traces that articulate relationships with space, time, and emotion. In this way, the human body in art continues to function not only as a motif of representation, but as an active medium for generating meaning.

Absent body: definition and theoretical justification

The concept of the Absent body in contemporary art emerges as an interdisciplinary phenomenon, connecting aesthetics, semiotics, phenomenology and the philosophy of imagination. The Absent body is not a body that is visible or physically recognizable, but one that "appears" through experience, signs, personal interpretation. It exists as a possibility, as a potential activation of imagination. Expanding the definition of Absent body, the word "absent" can be

associated with "conceptual" or "imagined body". As Lisa Blackman writes, "Although the sense in sense-making might make us think of a more sentient body, it is generally linked to interpretation, to judgment and ultimately to the work of thought. We are back with culture from the neck up, as a famous scholar once said, and the body or what it means to have and be a body seems to have disappeared again, or at least to merely be an absent presence." [10]. All of these terms refer to that which exists in experience, but not in material form. This tension between presence and absence is the main principle of the imagined body.

In Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological philosophy, the body is not only an object, but also a means of perception: "We have a world only by having a body: "the body is our anchorage in a world" [11]. The Absent body here becomes "I am" that interacts with the world not the words, but through sensory experience, gaze, imagination. Lithuanian philosopher Kristupas Sabolius, speaking about the power of imagination, puts forward the idea that it is not only a means of representation, but also a creator of reality: "Imagination is not what creates illusions, it creates the possibilities of reality" [12]. Thus, the Absent body is not a fiction — it is the potential to exist, to be recognized, to be "filled" in the viewer's imagination. Such Body can also be understood as a sign in a semiotic structure. According to F. de Saussure, a sign always consists of a signifier (material expression) and a signifié (meaning). "The linguistic sign unites, not a thing and a name, but a concept and sound-image" [13]. The imaginary body is precisely that space between them — a sign without a clear form, but with a strong meaning. J. Derrida would add: "meaning is always deferred" (différance) — meaning is not fixed, it is constantly postponed, spreading through the system of signs, never fully realized [14].

In this way, the absent body functions as an open structure — it does not

exist without a viewer, without a context. Its boundaries are not drawn, it emerges through active viewing, thought, feeling. In Umberto Eco's theory of the "open work", this principle is emphasized as one of the essential characteristics of contemporary art: "Every reception of a work of art is both an interpretation and a performance of it" [15]. Marina Abramović's work "The Artist is Present" perfectly reflects the case when the body becomes a field of experience, although it is almost inactive physically — the viewer "fills" the invisible body. Thus, the imaginary body is perceived more as a process than an object. It is a body that is born from vision, from a cultural code, from sensory memory. A body that isnt there, yet it exist.

Cases of Absent body occur not only in the visual arts, it is a widely used practice in design and commercial activities. The imaginary body provides an opportunity to present the desired image more expressively, without emphasizing human intervention in the image itself, but providing an understanding, a feeling of how it is related to the person, that the person is or was in that image. For example, in the field of fashion design, costumes are depicted without the person itself. Or interior design examples with a human "footprint" — the images with a long exposure and a blurred silhouette of the human body. So if we observe it more broadly, we find plenty of examples of the Absent body in the field of design and advertising, which indicates how acceptable and understandable the meaning of Absent body is, how often it is used, but not clearly named as a phenomenal way of expressing a concept.

Semiological and viewing aspects: bbthe body as a sign and a field of interpretation

The Absent body in visual art often functions as a sign — not a direct representation, but a meaningful struc-

Fig. 5 Kamilė Jadevičiūtė. From the serie "Future Fossils". Kamilė Jadevičiūtė talk about traces left by humans in the layers of the Earth and draw a parallel between the print and fossils.
Source: author's own artwork..

ture rooted in systems of language and culture. According to Ferdinand de Saussure, a sign is composed of a signifier (a form of expression) and a signified (a concept) [16]. The imagined body performs this dual function – it is not a fixed form, but invites the process of meaning-making in the consciousness of the viewer. Yves Klein series of works "Anthropometries" is an example where absent body is a central paradox – the artworks are made by bodies, but in fi-

Fig. 6 Tamara Pathak. No(BODY) 2023-2025. A video installation allows viewers to identify with the projected image, questioning the interaction of connection with themselves, the environment and the work. An individual narrative is created based on the viewer's imagination and experience. The lithographic stones become witnesses and mediators of the body's interaction with the cold stone, reflecting the questions and hesitations that lie within. Source: author's own artwork.

nal works there is only traces remains. The absence of body becomes a part of the experience. This aligns with Klein's interest in impersonality – art not as personal expression, but as an imprint of being [17].

Roland Barthes, while developing the analysis of signs, claims that signs can be decoded at various levels [18]. The imaginary body thus becomes a part of the cultural text – it is not so much represented as constantly re-formed in interpretations. Charles Ogden and Ivor Richards proposed the "meaningful triangle" and explained that meaning is born from the relationship between sign, thought and referent [19]. The Absent body often does not have a clear material referent – its "presence" is created at the junction

of thought and cultural context. This is especially evident in contemporary art practice, where the body perceived as an incomplete field of signs. Jacques Lacan's theory of the "mirror stage" propose the identification that occurs through visual recognition, which forms the concept of the "I". The Absent body in this paradigm becomes the "other" that encourages the viewer to reflect on themselves and create meanings through projection [20].

The body is not only observed – it transcends its physical contour and becomes a tool for the formation of psychological identity. Based on the previously mentioned Umberto Eco's theory of the "open work", the Absent body acquires with another dimension. U. Eco writes that every work of art allows for "infinite

interpretations", because the generation of meanings is the responsibility of the viewer [21]. The Absent body in this case is not presented as a final image, but as an open space of meaningful possibilities, belonging to the viewer's imagination and cultural experience. In this way, the combination of semiotic and psychoanalytic theory allows us to understand the Absent body as a dynamic, interpretive phenomenon that operates not through representation, but through an active mechanism of vision, personal experience and imagination.

The artwork *no(BODY)* arises from the creative searches and the artist's intuition regarding the possibilities of conceptual body expression, which is confirmed by art theory and philosophical ideas. The case of a body print is used, when the trace of the body performs the meaning of a sign and/or signifier. A conscious distance is maintained from the creator's body, in order to support the viewer's ability to identify with the work through a personal prism. Meanwhile, graphic artist Kamilė Jadevičiūtė has been researching the geological origin of limestone and nature's imprints – fossils – and has shared her results and observations on the subject. She claims that as the lithographic ink dries, it forms a pattern in which the water leaves its drying trace, like a time diagram. Repeated pressing, grinding, drawing, pressing and grinding again on the same stone layers are separating the experienced time.

The act of touching sedimentary rock evokes thoughts about the long scales of geological time, which encourages us to reconsider our place in it [22]. Both the imprints of nature and the imprint of the *no(BODY)* work inextricably speak of time and meaning. The Absent body is, in part, determined by time – especially in the case of an imprint/trace. Therefore, we can say that the body that was here (past time) becomes imaginary.

The lithography stones in *no(BODY)* perform the function of contact in both a direct (physiological) and a me-taphorical (communication or understanding) sense. The stone accepts the body itself and preserves information (time, pattern, movement, feeling, etc.). In classical lithography, drawings made on stone are printed on paper, but when it comes to the imaginary body and the relationship between the stone and the body, their important contact becomes evident. Not the contact of contact, which would have been the case if the image had been transferred to paper, but of a living body and a relatively living stone. Paint is used to create a signifier that acts as a leap of thought. No less important is the temperature difference between these elements, which, in essence, acts as a physical plus and minus relationship, evoking an important question: will the body warm the stone, or will the stone cool down the body?

Conclusion

The Absent body in contemporary art emerges as a specific form of expression of physicality, which does not exist through image, but is born through experience, interpretation and imagination. The concept of this body is not related to physical presence, but to aesthetic, cultural and semiotic potential. It becomes a sign that invites the viewer to an active process of creating meanings.

While analyzing a work through the prism of the Absent body, the position of the viewer also changes – he is no longer just an observer, but becomes a creator. The body acquires meanings not through its representation, but through its absence, emptiness, signs, impressions. Such an understanding of the body is based on the poststructuralist theory of language and signs and the phenomenology of imagination, which reveals the importance of the body as a subjective experience. The article examines how contemporary art uses the strategies of the imaginary body, which allow expanding the concept of the body beyond the boundaries of visuality. This tendency shows that contem-

porary art based less on representation, but more on practice of experience, where the viewer's consciousness and sensations become part of the work. ■

Tamara Pathak

Fig. 7 Tamara Pathak. From photography serie "Body-scape" 2024. Fragmented photographs of the artist's body gives an impression of scape. Not a landscape, not a city scape, but bodyscape. Author's own artwork

References

1. Merleau Ponty, M. (2012). Phenomenology of perception. London and New York: Routledge, p. 36.
2. Robins, G. (1994). The Art of Ancient Egypt. Harvard University Press.
3. Winter, I. (2000). On Art in the Ancient Near East. Brill.
4. Cormack, R. (2000). Byzantine Art. Oxford University Press.
5. Grabar, O. (1987). The Formation of Islamic Art. Yale University Press.
6. Held, J. S. (1980). Rubens and the Book of Nature. Princeton University Press.
7. Clark, T. J. (1999). The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers. Princeton University Press.
8. Nochlin, L. (1991). The Politics of Vision: Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society. Harper & Row.
9. Herschdorfer, N. (2019). Body: The Photography Book. New York: Thames and Hudson.

10. Blackman, L. (2008). The Body: The Key
    Concepts. Oxford: Berg Publishers, p. 11.
11. Merleau Ponty, M. (2012). Phenomenology
    of perception. London and New York: Routledge, p. 12.
12. Sabolius, K. (2013). Įsivaizduojamybė. Vilnius:
    Lithuanian cultural research institute, p. 22.
13. Saussure, F. (1983). Course in General Linguistics
    (R. Harris, Trans.). London: Duckworth, p. 66.
14. Philosophy Institute Research Methodology (2023).
    Understanding Derrida's Différance. https://philosophy.
    institute/research-methodology/understanding-
    derrida-differance/ [access 03.08.2025].
15. Eco, U. (1989).The Open Work. Cambridge,
    Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, p. 37.
16. Saussure, F. (1983). Course in General Linguistics
    (R. Harris, Trans.). London: Duckworth, p. 66.
17. Aventurier C. (Director). (2020). Yves Klein –
    Arman | Pioneers of Avant-Garde Art.
18. Barthes, R. (1977). Image, Music, Text (S. Heath,
    Trans.). London: Fontana Press, p. 32-51.
19. Ogden, C. K., Richards, I. A. (1923). The Meaning
    of Meaning. New York: Harcourt, Brace, p. 11.
20. Lacan, J. (2006). Écrits: The First Complete
    Edition in English (B. Fink, Trans.). New York,
    London: W. W. Norton; Company, p. 75.
21. Eco, U. (1989).The Open Work. Cambridge,
    Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, p. 4.
22. Vilnius Academy of Arts (2025). Kamile Jadeviciute |
    Ateities fosilijos. https://www.vda.lt/lt/studiju_programos/
    magistranturos-studiju-programos/grafika-1/naujienos/
    kamile-jadeviciute-ateities-fosilijos [access 14.09.2025].
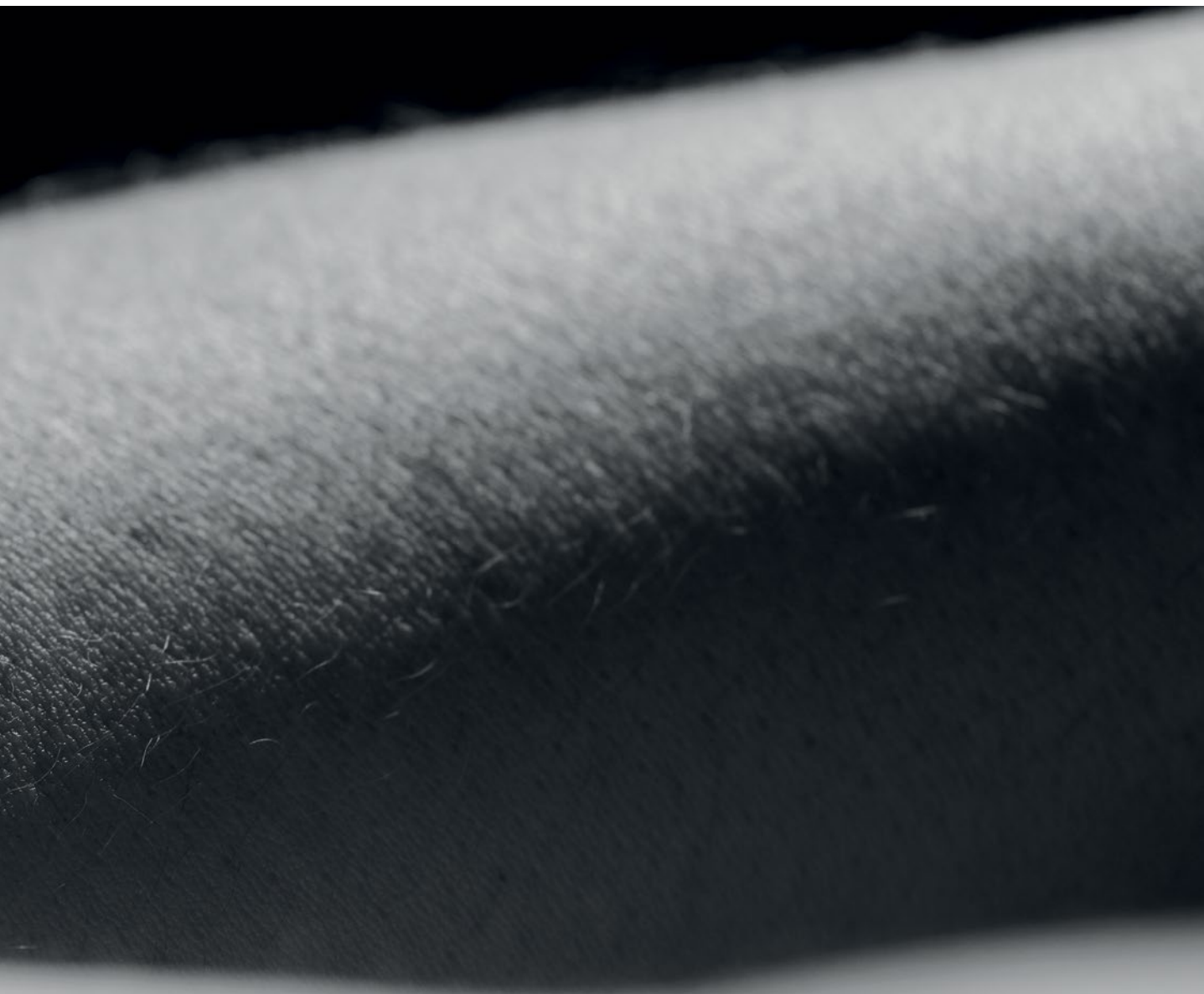
Heritage Dissemination Through Education:
Potential and Impact of Restoration Center's Communication

#heritage communication #museum education #restoration #digital heritage #social participation

peer-reviewed
article

Ingrida Bagočiūnienė, PhD

Abstract

This article examines how restoration centres function as both educational and communicative platforms in the dissemination of cultural heritage. Focusing on the Pranas Gudynas Restoration Centre in Lithuania, it analyses participatory practices, educational strategies, and digital communication tools that shape public understanding and strengthen cultural awareness. Restoration centres are explored not only as technical institutions but also as dialogical spaces where professionals and the public meet. By organizing guided tours of restoration workshops (fig. 1) and practical programs such as the educational gilding workshop (fig. 2), the Centre fosters experiential learning and public engagement. Digital innovations such as virtual tours, livestreams, and social media communication extend its impact beyond physical boundaries, contributing to inclusive and sustainable heritage education. The article contextualizes these practices within contemporary theories of heritage communication, participatory museology, and digital culture. It concludes that restoration centres, when empowered with educational missions, not only safeguard heritage but also build trust, prevent amateur interventions, and contribute to long-term cultural participation.

Cultural heritage today is understood as a dynamic process that encompasses not only preservation but also active communication, interpretation, and education. Museums and their restoration centres/workshops are increasingly seen not merely as technical institutions but as spaces for cultural dialogue where specialists and the public can interact. This is particularly relevant in today's context, where digital technologies and social media are transforming the ways knowledge is disseminated [1].

The growing role of the information society and technological advancements have created new challenges for cultural heritage institutions, which must adapt to modern communication trends. Heritage communication is no longer unidirectional — it is a dialogue in which society actively participates. According to M. Carrozzino and M. Bergamasco [2], only sustainably implemented digital strategies can ensure a deep and unfragmented understanding of heritage. Therefore, it is important to examine how educational and communicative initiatives influence societal behavior toward cultural heritage. Heritage institutions also face pressure to become more open to the public and to involve visitors in decision-making processes. This trend reflects a broader shift from "top-down" heritage protection models to co-creation approaches, in which visitors' knowledge, experiences, and emotional connections are valued [3]. Heritage becomes not just an object, but a medium of connection between generations, communities, and cultural identities.

The Educational Role of Restoration Centres

For example, the Pranas Gudynas Restoration Centre organizes guided tours of the restoration workshops, led by re-

storers themselves (fig. 1), allowing visitors to directly observe the tools, techniques, and principles of conservation. In addition, the Centre offers a gilding educational program, during which participants apply gold leaf to a frame decoration fragment (fig. 2), thus gaining hands-on experience of historical techniques and processes.

Restoration centres, such as the Pranas Gudynas Restoration Centre, implement educational programs that help visitors understand conservation ethics and restoration practices. According to Sani [4], the educational activities of museums and related institutions should focus on critical thinking, experiential learning, and inclusive interpretation. It is essential that knowledge is delivered purposefully, which is why the Pranas Gudynas Restoration Centre has introduced interactive tours led by professional restorers who act as educators or guides. Educational workshops, lectures, and practical activities not only foster cultural awareness but also cultivate respect for professional work.

Global practice shows that educational projects in the heritage sector empower visitors and encourage their engagement. For example, Canada's Ingenium museum network integrates interactive screens, tactile material zones, and educational platforms for schools. This transforms the visitor from a passive observer into an active explorer [5]. Similarly, the Pranas Gudynas Restoration Centre offers educational programs based on a constructivist approach to learning. It is important to note that education in these centres functions as a two-way process — not only does the public learn from professionals, but specialists also gain valuable insights into visitors' expectations and understanding. This two-way dialogue fosters visitor empowerment, particularly among youth. Research shows that educational activities involving experimentation and independent exploration have a stronger impact on students' perception of heritage value [6].

Application of Digital Technologies in Heritage Communication

Virtual reality (VR) and extended reality (XR) solutions open new possibilities for exploring cultural heritage. Studies show that VR technologies not only enhance the understanding of complex restoration processes but also strengthen visitors' emotional connections to heritage [7]. According to Wang and Zhang [8], metaverse technologies allow for the creation of personalized heritage experiences that expand the boundaries of educational content.

Digital tools empower visitors to experience objects interactively rather than merely visually. For instance, the Smithsonian Institution has developed a digital restoration archive that allows users to follow the process of restoring a work of art in a virtual environment. This model not only increases transparency but also builds trust in institutions. Scholars note that such tools not only inform but also cultivate ethical sensitivity in visitors [9]. The application of digital technologies also enables the capture and preservation of fragile forms of heritage. For example, 3D scanning is used not only for object reconstruction but also for creating educational simulators in which users can practically "perform" restoration actions. This method is especially useful in academic contexts, where theoretical and practical knowledge is combined [10].

The Role of Social Media

Social media is not only a communication channel but also a tool for community building. Research emphasizes that strategic content planning and audience analysis are essential for effective dissemination [11]. Restoration centres that are active in the digital space have the opportunity not only to disseminate knowledge but also to shape cultural discourse and respond to inaccurate interpretations.

Recent studies show that social networks are becoming not only means

Fig. 1 Guided tour in the restoration workshops.
Source: Pranas Gudynas Restoration Centre.

of content dissemination but also platforms for collective memory-making [12]. This is especially important for marginalized groups, who can contribute to pluralistic heritage narratives through digital expression. For effectiveness, it is necessary to consistently apply network analysis methodologies and evaluate impact using communication indicators. Communication with visitors must be clear and consistent. Information should be easily understandable and delivered in a way that helps visitors grasp the intended message [13]. Consistency ensures that across all communication channels, users receive the same message and are kept informed about updates and changes.

In addition to traditional social media, new platforms like TikTok are emerging, enabling quicker access to younger audiences. For example, European cultural institutions have started using interactive challenges (e.g., #HeritageRestorationChallenge) to encourage users to share personal stories related to heritage. This demonstrates that digital communication is dynamic and constantly evolving, requiring ongoing monitoring and adaptation.

Among the activities are practical workshops such as the gilding program (fig. 2), where par-

ticipants perform gilding on decorative frame fragments, and guided tours led by professional restorers in the workshops (fig. 1). These activities foster not only knowledge but also experiential understanding, strengthening visitors' respect for restoration work.

The Case of the Pranas Gudynas Restoration Centre

In addition, the Centre collaborates with regional museums in Lithuania by organizing educational trips and dissemination events. This decentralizes heritage education and enables outreach to smaller audiences in the regions. Alongside traditional activities, the Centre also produces documentary-style videos about restoration processes, which are shared via social media and museum platforms. According to visitor surveys [16], these efforts increase public trust in staff competence and foster interest in cultural heritage.

To achieve social inclusion, the Centre works with schools and social service centers, offering tailored educational programs. This ensures that restoration knowledge reaches various societal groups. It is essential that information dissemination occurs at the right time. When informa-

tion is received promptly, visitors can respond appropriately to news and updates [14]. It is also important to respond quickly to questions raised by visitors.

To communicate effectively with museum visitors, it is crucial to understand that communication is a two-way process [15]. This means that the museum must not only provide information but also listen to visitor feedback and questions in order to better understand their needs and reactions. For this reason, the Centre collects both quantitative and qualitative data on participant experiences to continuously improve its educational offerings [17].

Recommendations

Considering current trends, it is recommended to:
- Integrate VR and XR solutions into educational programs;
- Develop consistent social media communication strategies;
- Involve communities in content creation;
- Ensure the dissemination of ethical restoration principles;

- Create multilingual and accessible forms of education;
- Develop educational programs introducing traditional techniques or allowing participation in basic conservation/restoration practices;
- Implement activities that allow visitors to feel like part of the restoration process;
- Integrating heritage education in school curricula;
- Promoting behind-the-scenes restoration processes;
- Encouraging collaboration between professionals and communities.

Conclusions

Restoration centres have become inseparable from cultural communication policy. They not only preserve but actively create new forms of knowledge by applying the latest technologies and participatory methods. The Pranas Gudynas Restoration Centre is a successful example of integrating education, social media communication, and restoration ethics to support sustainable heritage preservation.

Fig. 2 Educational gilding program – participants applying gold leaf to frame decorations.
Source: Pranas Gudynas Restoration Centre.

Visitor survey results at the Pranas Gudynas Restoration Centre confirm that an integrated approach to education and communication — based on modern technologies and participatory practices — is essential for achieving long-term impact in heritage protection. Future research should focus on qualitative indicators that assess how communication tools shape cultural awareness and societal values. It is likely that restoration centres will become increasingly active knowledge platforms, integrating physical, digital, and emotional heritage into cohesive educational systems. This transformation requires institutional flexibility, the capacity to experiment with new formats, and continuous dialogue with audiences. Contemporary heritage protection is more than preservation — it is active cultural participation, with restoration centres playing a key role. ∎

Ingrida Bagočiūnienė, PhD

References

1. González-Pérez L. et al., Communication and the Museum Experience in the Digital Age, "Museum Management and Curatorship" No. 38, 2023, p. 233-250.

2. Carrozzino M., Bergamasco M., Beyond Virtual Museums: Experiencing Immersive Virtual Reality in Real Museums, "Journal of Cultural Heritage" No. 39, 2019, p. 121-131.

3. Simon N., The Participatory Museum, Museum 2.0, Santa Cruz, 2020.

4. Sani M., Participatory Practices in Museums: Building Inclusive Communities, "International Journal of Cultural Policy" No. 26, 2020, p. 345-361.

5. Marty P., Museum Informatics and Interactive Learning, "Museum & Society" No. 18, 2020, p. 45-62.

6. Kotler N., Kotler P., Museum Strategy and Marketing: Designing Missions, Building Audiences, Wiley, New York, 2019.

7. Zhao Y., Li Y., Dai T., Sedini C., Wu X., Jiang W., Li J., Zhu K., Zhai B., Li M., Virtual reality in heritage education for enhanced learning experience: a mini-review and design considerations, Frontiers in Virtual Reality, 31 Mar 2025, DOI: 10.3389/frvir.2025.1560594.

8. Wang Y., Zhang X., Metaverse Applications in Cultural Heritage: A Review, "Heritage Science" No. 12, 2024, p. 66.

9. Sylaiou S. et al., Communicating Ethics in Digital Cultural Heritage, "Heritage and Society" No. 14, 2022, p. 89-104.

10. Addison A. et al., 3D Digitization and Simulation for Cultural Heritage, "Digital Applications in Archaeology and Cultural Heritage" No. 28, 2023, p. 55-67.

11. Gulotta R. et al., Social Media Strategies in Cultural Institutions: Balancing Outreach and Ethics, "Journal of Digital Culture" No. 11, 2024, p. 101-119.

12. Arvanitis K., Social Media and Cultural Memory: Negotiating Public History in the Digital Age, "Public History Review" No. 28, 2021, p. 1-15.

13. Watkins J., Decolonizing Archaeological Theory and Practice, "Annual Review of Anthropology" No. 47, 2018, p. 111-127.

14. Wowkowych S., Community-Driven Heritage Interpretation: Case Studies from North America, "Heritage & Society" No. 13, 2020, p. 202-220.

15. Schrøder K., Cultural Participation in the Digital Age, "Media, Culture & Society" No. 40, 2018, p. 129-146.

16. Lithuanian National Museum of Art (LNDM), Annual Report, Vilnius, 2023.

17. Lithuanian National Museum of Art (LNDM), Research Report on Educational Programs, Vilnius, 2024.

The Historical Evolution of 19th-Century Painting Restoration:

authenticity, esthetics and cultural dynamics

#painting restoration #authenticity #cultural heritage #Walter Benjamin #Theodor Adorno #XIXth century

Eglė Aleknaitė, PhD

peer-reviewed
article

Abstract

This article explores the evolution of easel painting restoration science in the 19th century, focusing on its implications for the perception of authenticity, aesthetics, and the role of restoration in cultural development. The 19th century marked a shift from traditional, artist-led restoration practices to the institutionalization of restoration as a professional and scientific discipline. Restoration gradually became part of public cultural policy, influenced by emerging museums, national collections, and new ethical standards. Through a historical and theoretical analysis, the article highlights how philosophical ideas, particularly Walter Benjamin's theory of the aura and Theodor Adorno's aesthetic dialectics, provide insight into the complex relationship between artwork, time, and restoration. Two notable case studies – Andrea del Sarto's restructured altarpiece and Titian's repeatedly retouched Madonna – demonstrate the tension between historical integrity and visual unity. Restoration is presented as both a necessary conservation act and a transformative cultural process that affects how artworks are perceived, valued, and remembered. By examining these intersections, the article argues that restoration is not merely technical but deeply embedded in the philosophical and cultural fabric of heritage management.

Introduction

The 19th century marked a pivotal turning point in the history of art restoration. With the institutionalization of museums, advances in material science, and the emergence of art as cultural heritage, the role of restoration shifted from mere repair to a multifaceted intellectual and ethical endeavor. This article explores how painting restoration in the 19th century evolved from a practice of aesthetic enhancement into a scientific and philosophical field of inquiry. Through historical examples, philosophical reflections, and technical developments, the paper examines how concepts of authenticity, originality, and aura were negotiated and redefined. The aim is to investigate the influence of restoration science not only on the physical preservation of paintings but also on cultural memory, interpretive frameworks, and the identity of the artwork itself.

Conceptual Foundations and Cultural Relevance of Painting Restoration

The preservation of cultural heritage is a fundamental element in the development of society. Over time, cultural objects deteriorate due to various factors. The evolving efforts to protect cultural values gradually developed into restoration as a distinct branch of science and art. The term "restoration" has been interpreted differently throughout history, reflecting shifting goals, materials, and methodologies. Each epoch brought different conceptions of artistic value, and restoration aesthetics mirrored the spirit of the time, while the methods and technologies applied indicated the level of scientific progress [1].

The science of easel painting restoration combines both technological and artistic disciplines. This interdisciplinary nature raises critical questions about authenticity, originality, and the preservation or transformation of the aura—as conceptualized by Walter Benjamin [2]. The goal of this inquiry is to examine the development of easel painting restoration as a dynamic process reflecting the changing perception of art across epochs and the ethical dilemmas concerning the authenticity of artworks. It also aims to understand how scientific advances in restoration influence the cultural development of society [3].

The process of restoring paintings not only preserves the materiality of artworks but often restores their aesthetic appearance, uncovers historical layers, and contributes to the understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage. The historical evolution of restoration practices has significantly impacted cultural progress. Paintings preserved and restored over time became increasingly accessible to the public through museums and galleries, thereby inspiring dialogue between different social classes, epochs, and cultures. Furthermore, the restoration of artworks helped shape the public's perception of artistic and historical value [4].

Restoration can be understood as a transformative process that integrates artworks into modern technological and institutional systems. This theme holds relevance not only from cultural and historical perspectives but also from philosophical and technological viewpoints. It deepens our understanding of how restoration influences the perception of art and contributes to broader cultural development [5].

As easel painting restoration evolved and matured, new questions arose regarding the preservation of authenticity in the face of shifting ethical and aesthetic norms. The emergence of restoration as a formal discipline led to debates about the degree of intervention permissible without compromising the historical and artistic essence of the artwork. Theorists such as Benjamin and Adorno provided conceptual tools to approach these dilemmas, positioning restoration within the broader discourse of cultural continuity and artistic identity [6].

The Historical Evolution of 19th-Century Painting Restoration: Case Studies and Visual Transformations

By the 19th century, museums and art institutions began to systematically restore works of art, often altering their appearance. These interventions were not only practical but also aesthetic and ideological in nature. One prominent example is Andrea del Sarto's Madonna and Child with Saint Elizabeth, the Infant Saint John the Baptist and Two Angels (fig.1) housed in the Louvre. In 1695, the painting was altered into an oval shape and enlarged to better fit decorative interiors [9]. By 1750, the intervention was reversed, and the painting was restored to its original rectangular format [7].

Similarly, Titian's Madonna with a Rabbit (Madonna col Coniglio, 1530) (fig.2), also in the Louvre, underwent numerous restorations over the centuries. Notably, a 19th-century repaint on the right-hand side of the composition introduced stylistic inconsistencies. During a 1991 conservation campaign, analysis revealed these additions and partially removed them to recover the original structure [10]

These case studies exemplify the complex interplay between historical integrity and aesthetic reinterpretation that characterizes 19th-century restoration. They also demonstrate the importance of scientific analysis in uncovering hidden layers and past interventions, thereby guiding ethical restoration decisions. The visual narrative of these artworks has been shaped by centuries of change, debate, and restoration philosophy.

Moreover, these examples underscore how restoration was historically driven by the tastes and values of specific periods [11]. In the case of Titian, 19th-century interventions reflected the Romantic ideal of harmony and beauty, while later conservation efforts aimed to reveal the painter's original intent. This highlights how restoration does

Fig 1 Andrea del Sarto, Madonna and Child with Saint Elizabeth, the Infant Saint John the Baptist and Two Angels, Musée du Louvre, Paris. Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Andrea_del_Sarto_-_Madonna_and_Child_with_Saint_Elizabeth,the_Infant_Saint_John_the_Baptist_and_Two_Angels-_WGA00302.jpg

not simply preserve the past — it also reveals the present's relationship to it.

In this context, 19th-century restoration functioned not only as a technical process but also as an ideological statement. Decisions about what to restore, what to repaint, and what to leave untouched were inherently interpretive acts, influenced by the knowledge, tools, and values of the time. As such, every restored artwork became a layered object, both physically and conceptually, reflecting its original creation and subsequent reinterpretation.

The growing use of chemical solvents, new varnishes, and synthetic pigments in the 19th century also contributed to the material transformation of many paintings [12]. While some substances improved stability and visibility, others introduced long-term damage. These challenges fueled the emerging discourse on reversibility — a principle suggesting that restoration actions should be undoable without harming the original material. Though not universally adopted at the time, this principle laid the groundwork for modern conservation ethics.

Additionally, the role of documentation became increasingly recognized in the second half of the 19th century [13]. Museum institutions began to keep more detailed records of restoration processes, including written reports, photographic documentation, and material analyses. This practice provided transparency and accountability, enabling future restorers to trace previous interventions and make informed decisions.

These developments marked a shift from intuition-based to research-based restoration, incorporating the growing influence of chemistry, microscopy, and material science. Conservators now relied on tests and analyses to identify original pigments, distinguish overpaints, and assess the condition of supports and binders. This scientific turn elevated restoration from an artisanal practice to a scholarly and technical discipline [14].

Philosophical Reflections on Restoration: Authenticity, Aura, and Temporal Identity

The transformation of painting restoration into a discipline grounded in both science and aesthetics invites a deeper philosophical examination. The 19th century not only formalized methods and technologies but also intensified reflection on what it means to preserve a work of art. At the center of this reflection lies the concept of authenticity — its definition, preservation, and transformation.

Walter Benjamin's essay The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction profoundly influenced how authenticity in art is conceptualized. According to Benjamin, authenticity is bound to the artwork's unique existence in time and space — its "aura" [2]. Restoration, while intending to preserve, inevitably alters this aura. Each intervention imposes a layer of interpretation, potentially distancing the artwork from its original context. Yet, Benjamin also acknowledges that modernity necessitates new ways of engaging with the past. Restoration becomes a paradoxical act: it protects aura while simultaneously reconfiguring it.

Theodor Adorno advanced this idea by presenting the artwork as a dialectical object — at once material and conceptual, historical and autonomous. In Aesthetic Theory, Adorno argues that artworks possess an intrinsic temporality, their meaning unfolding over time through interactions with viewers, contexts, and conditions [6]. Restoration, in this view, is not simply about returning an object to a fixed state but about negotiating its dynamic process of becoming.

These theoretical insights challenge the notion of a single, objective standard of authenticity. They emphasize that every restoration decision carries ethical weight, and that such decisions must consider not only technical fidelity but also the evolving cultural and historical meanings of the artwork. This reorients restoration from a purely technical endeavor to an interpretive and responsible practice situated within cultural memory.

A further implication lies in the concept of historical layering. Paintings often bear visible traces of previous restorations, environmental effects, and institutional treatments. Should these be removed to retrieve an imagined original, or preserved as part of the object's historical narrative? Contemporary conservation increasingly supports the latter view, advocating for transparency and the acknowledgment of change.

The discourse on restoration ethics that began in the 19th century thus continues to evolve. It challenges professionals to maintain balance — preserving visual legibility without fabricating false unity, and conserving material structure without severing historical continuity. Benjamin and Adorno's philosophies remain central

to these discussions, underscoring that restoration is not only preservation of form but a participation in the life of culture.

Conclusion

The evolution of painting restoration in the 19th century reveals the complex interweaving of science, aesthetics, and cultural values. Restoration practices transitioned from intuitive interventions to systematically documented and theoretically grounded approaches. This development was influenced by the growth of public museums, technological innovations, and emerging discourses on authenticity and ethics. Key thinkers like Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno reframed restoration as a philosophical act, one that engages with the temporality, meaning, and aura of artworks.

The examples of Andrea del Sarto and Titian show how restoration decisions can both preserve and reshape the visual narrative of a painting. Furthermore, the increased role of scientific analysis and documentation paved the way for modern conservation principles such as reversibility, transparency, and minimal intervention. Ultimately, 19th-century restoration set the foundation for current practices that understand the artwork not as a fixed object but as a living artifact embedded in a continuum of historical, cultural, and material transformations.

This expanded understanding invites us to view restoration not only as a professional task but as an ethical dialogue between past and present. Each conservation effort today is influenced by the legacy of 19th-century developments — be it through the institutional role of museums, the philosophical frameworks of interpretation, or the evolving technologies that deepen our ability to read and respond to material change. Restoration is no longer simply about preserving objects but about sustaining cultural meaning through critical and transparent engagement.

In this light, the restoration of paintings becomes a profound cultural act. It affirms the value of history while embracing the interpretive responsibilities of the present. As we continue to face new materials, degraded surfaces, and shifting cultural priorities, the legacy of 19th-century restoration will remain a foundation — and a challenge — for future generations of conservators, scholars, and viewers.

The examples of Andrea del Sarto and Titian show how restoration decisions can both preserve and reshape the visual narrative of a painting. Furthermore, the increased role of scientific analysis and documentation paved the way for modern conservation principles such as reversibility, transparency, and minimal intervention. Ultimately, 19th-century restoration set the foundation for current practices that understand the artwork not as a fixed object but as a living artifact embedded in a continuum of historical, cultural, and material transformations.

Eglė Aleknaitė, PhD

Fig. 2 Titian, Madonna with a Rabbit (Madonna col Coniglio, 1530), Musée du Louvre, Paris.
Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tiziano_-_Madonna_col_Bambino,_Santa_Caterina_d%27A-
lessandria_e_un_coniglio_bianco.jpg

References

1. Sitwell C., Staniforth S., Studies in the History of Painting Restoration, Archetype Publications, London, 1998, p. 11.
2. Benjamin W., The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction, Schocken Books, USA, 1968, p. 224.
3. Cimino G.A., Studying and Conserving Paintings, Archetype Publications, London, 2006, p. 55.
4. Etienne N., Does Conservation Challenge Art History?, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 2013, p. 25.
5. Kasiulytė R., Liūgienė V., Kaip ir iš ko kuriami paveikslai? w: Muziejinių eksponatų priežiūra I dalis, Lietuvos dailės muziejus, Wilno, 2008, p. 42.
6. Adorno T., Aesthetic Theory, London, 1997, p. 112.
7. Pakštas B., Senvaitienė J., Iš restauravimo istorijos: nuo užtapymų iki tradicijos, w: Muziejinių eksponatų priežiūra II dalis, Lietuvos dailės muziejus, Wilno, 2009, p. 34.
8. Darrow E., Art in the Public Eye: Conservation in the 19th Century, https://cool.culturalheritage.org/waac/wn/wn16/wn16-3/wn16-308.html [access: 10.02.2025].
9. Cimino G.A., Studying and Conserving Paintings, op. cit., s. 58.
10. Ibidem, s. 61.
11. Sitwell C., Staniforth S., op. cit., p. 76.
12. Kasiulytė R., Liūgienė V., op. cit., p. 48.
13. Etienne N., op. cit., p. 31.
14. Adorno T., op. cit., p. 118.

Digital Prototyping
in the Process
of Fashion Design

#2D #3D #digital technologies #design #prototyping

Ilze Bodža

Silvija Mežinska

Abstract

Technology has become essential in the fashion industry, driving innovation, efficiency, and sustainability. From design to retail, digital tools like CAD, 3D modeling, and AI are transforming how garments are created and marketed. The rise of digital fashion and "phygital" environments is reshaping traditional roles, merging physical and virtual processes. Investments in fashion tech are increasing, enabling smart textiles, wearable tech, immersive experiences and other technology. While digitalization brings many benefits, such as reduced waste and faster workflows, it also presents challenges like high costs and the need for new technical skills. It is of importance to identify the classification of technological direction in the field of fashion design to understand the opportunities provided.

peer-reviewed
article

Introduction

The presence of technology in the modern world is an integral part of any industry, the opportunities and advantages provided by the integration and use of technology ensure growth and development at any level of activity. Technology alongside digitalization ensures operational efficiency, higher quality and better process organization, and provides new opportunities for innovation and creativity.

Fashion designer I. Komarova describes fashion as an industry that lies on the border between design and art. At the same time, it is also a huge, resource-intensive industry that is criticized as a manifestation of consumer society [1].

Scientific research and practice prove that, with the rapid development of the field of technology, it has become a ubiquitous force, determining unprecedented changes in the fashion industry. Technology has become an indispensable partner in cooperation, redefining possibilities and expanding the boundaries of traditional design paradigms [2].

The rapid spread of personal computers and the introduction of the Internet in the late 20th century transformed digital culture. The impact of this phenomenon on fashion was felt as designers such as Jean Paul Gaultier turned to cyberspace for aesthetic inspiration, and Computer Aided Design (CAD) began to transform the garment manufacturing process [3].

A. Deniss describes the presence of digital transformation in fashion, which encompasses almost all stages of development, from design creation to retail. This includes the use of innovations such as process automation, robotics, AI, the Internet of Things (IoT) and others to create new growth opportunities. Digital technologies are fundamentally transforming fashion processes, allowing designers and entrepreneurs to discover new opportunities in the fashion industry [4].

Digital Fashion as the Future of the Industry

The phenomenon of "digital fashion" has recently been seen in the media as the next major step in the fashion industry. The increasing use of 3D software and digital prototyping in the fashion design process is part of the broader "fashion 4.0" digitalization process [5].

According to a 2022 report by McKinsey & Company, fashion companies invested 1.6-1.8 percent of their revenue in technology in 2021. This figure is expected to increase to 3.0-3.5 percent by 2030 (fig. 1) [6].

This highlights the growing importance of digital fashion as a key driver of transformation within the industry. The McKinsey & Company data reinforces this trend, showing a significant projected increase in tech investment by fashion companies, signaling a strong commitment to digital innovation and long-term industry evolution.

Fig. 1 Industry average technology investment.
Source: https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/state-of-fashion-technology-report-2022)

Fig. 2 Classification of Digital Fashion Innovations. Source: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/369845712_Defining_Digital_Fashion_and_Tracking_the_Developments_in_Relevant_Technologies)

The latest technologies in modern fashion design

Technology influences the fashion industry in diverse ways, with varying degrees of digitalization integrated throughout every stage of the process. From design and production to marketing and retail, technology has clearly left its mark on the fashion industry. With the advent of online shopping, social media and virtual reality technologies, the way people search for, and purchase clothing has changed exponentially [7], [8]. The symbiotic relationship between technology and fashion design has been widely studied, revealing the transformative impact of technology throughout the entire cycle of the fashion design process [2].

The presence of technology in fashion design can be divided into the following categories:

- the rise of smart textiles,
- digital and 3D fashion design,
- sustainability and technology,
- wearable technology and fashion,
- AI and machine learning in fashion design,
- the impact of immersive technologies [9].

These categories illustrate how technology is not only enhancing creativity and efficiency in fashion design but also reshaping industry's core values and practices.

Building on these technological categories, it becomes essential to explore in what ways digital technologies are applied within the clothing design process.

Digital technologies in clothing design

At the core of this technological evolution is the concept of digital fashion. Digital fashion is a multidisciplinary field that encompasses four main directions:

- digital design and e-prototyping,
- digital business and promotion,
- digital human and metaverse,
- phygital apparel and smart wearable technology (fig. 2).

Digital Design and E-prototyping is one of the most widely used and accessible areas within digital fashion, offering designers the ability to visualize garments, experiment with textures and patterns, and develop virtual prototypes without relying on physical samples. This approach not only speeds up the design process but also supports sustainability by minimizing material waste and allowing for rapid, cost-effective iteration before production.

To fully understand the impact of digital design and e-prototyping, it is important to explore
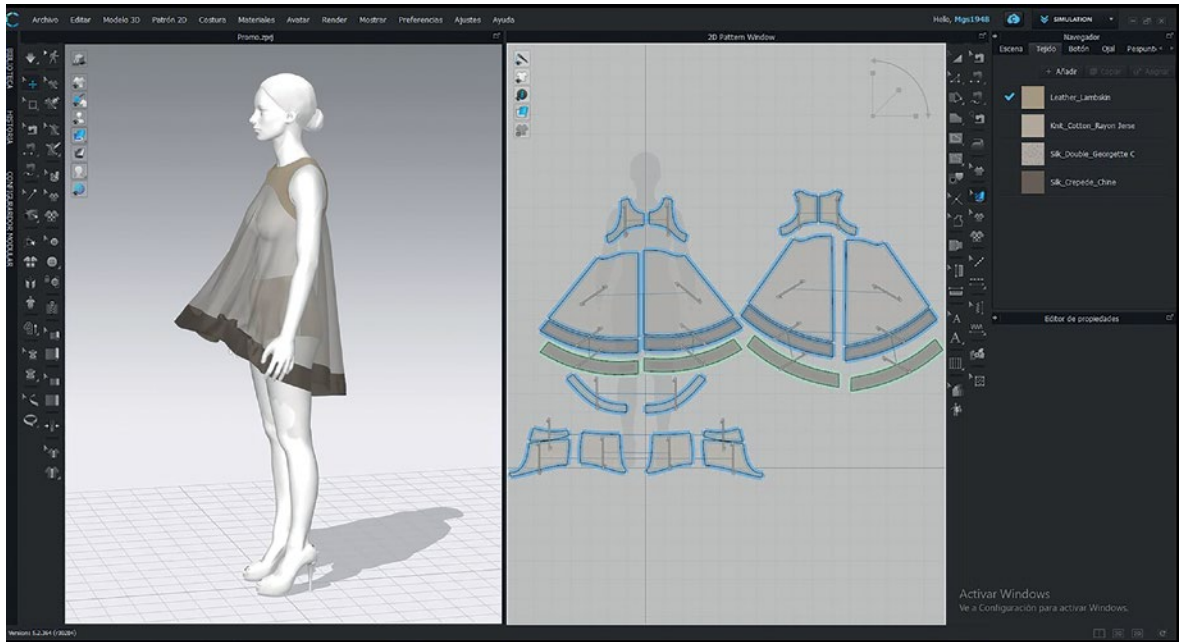
Fig. 3 3D prototyping in CLO3D program.
Source: https://abcseams.com/clo-3d-virtual-prototyping/)

the specific types and capabilities of 2D and 3D digital technologies that are reshaping the fashion design process.

Types and capabilities of 2D and 3D digital technologies

2D and 3D technologies have become an integral part of clothing design and prototyping, and their capabilities can be divided into:

- **Computer-aided design** (CAD): CAD software is the cornerstone of modern fashion design. It allows designers to create detailed sketches, models and simulate the fit of garments, which not only saves time but also reduces material waste.
- **3D modeling and virtual prototyping:** these tools allow designers to create and visualize garments in three dimensions before production. Virtual prototyping allows adjustments to be made during the design phase, reducing potential errors and saving production costs (fig. 3).
- **Digital textile printing:** this technology has revolutionized fabric design, allowing intricate patterns and vibrant colors to be printed directly onto textiles, opening new customization

options and significantly accelerating the design process [10].

Digital design and virtual prototyping involve 2D illustration, pattern creation, and sizing, as well as 3D simulation and fabric modeling—tools that significantly enhance efficiency and product quality. 2D and 3D digital technologies are among the most common and accessible tools in fashion design, offering relatively low costs while delivering a significant impact on efficiency, creativity, and production quality.

Having explored the capabilities of digital technologies, it is essential to consider that alongside advantages there are also some disadvantages these tools bring to the fashion design industry.

Project results and analyses

To explore current trends and opportunities at the intersection of fashion and technology and to promote research, several scientific grant projects were carried out within the university [11], [12]. One of which explored digital technologies in fashion design. A step-by-step approach was used to implement and evaluate various accessible digital technologies, with the goal of asses-
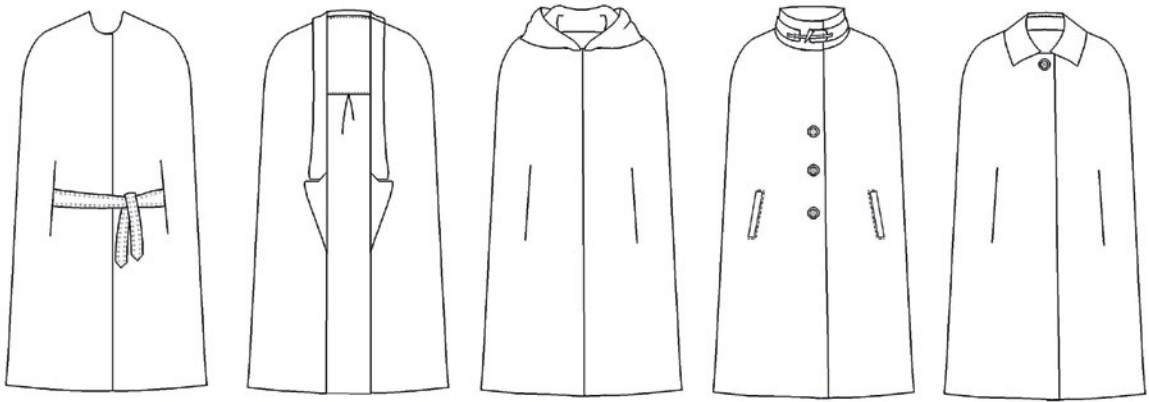
Fig. 4 Idea development in specialized program TexDesign. Source: own study.
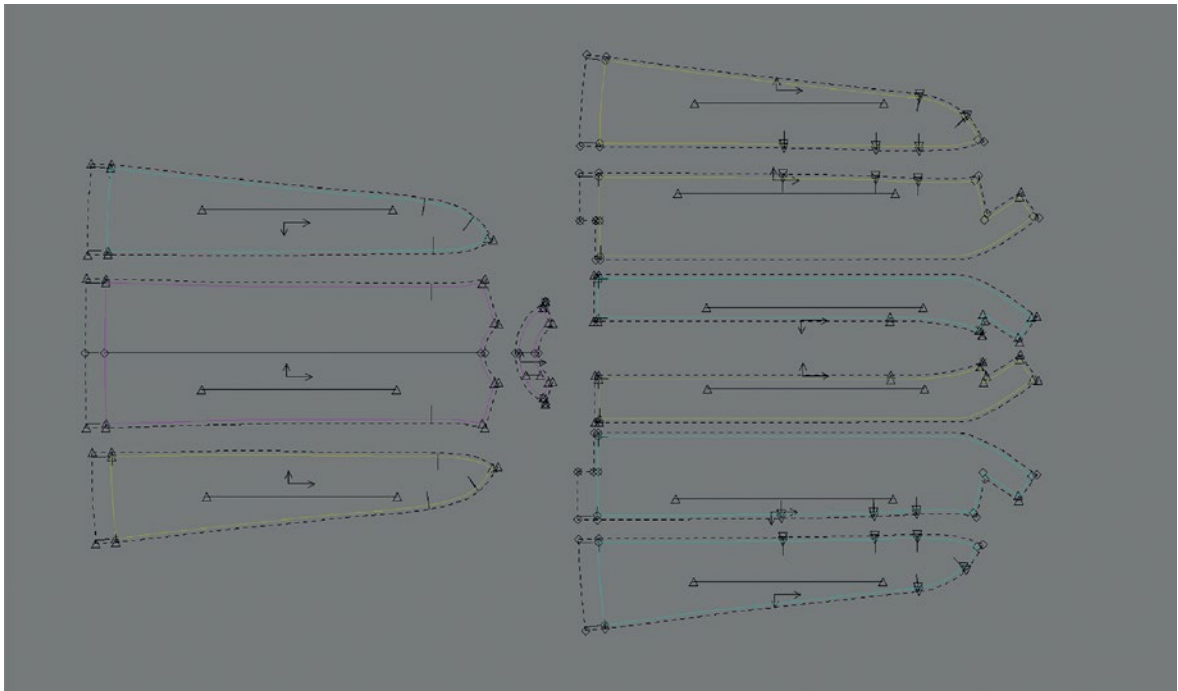

Fig. 5 Pattern layouts in specialized program AccuMark Gerber
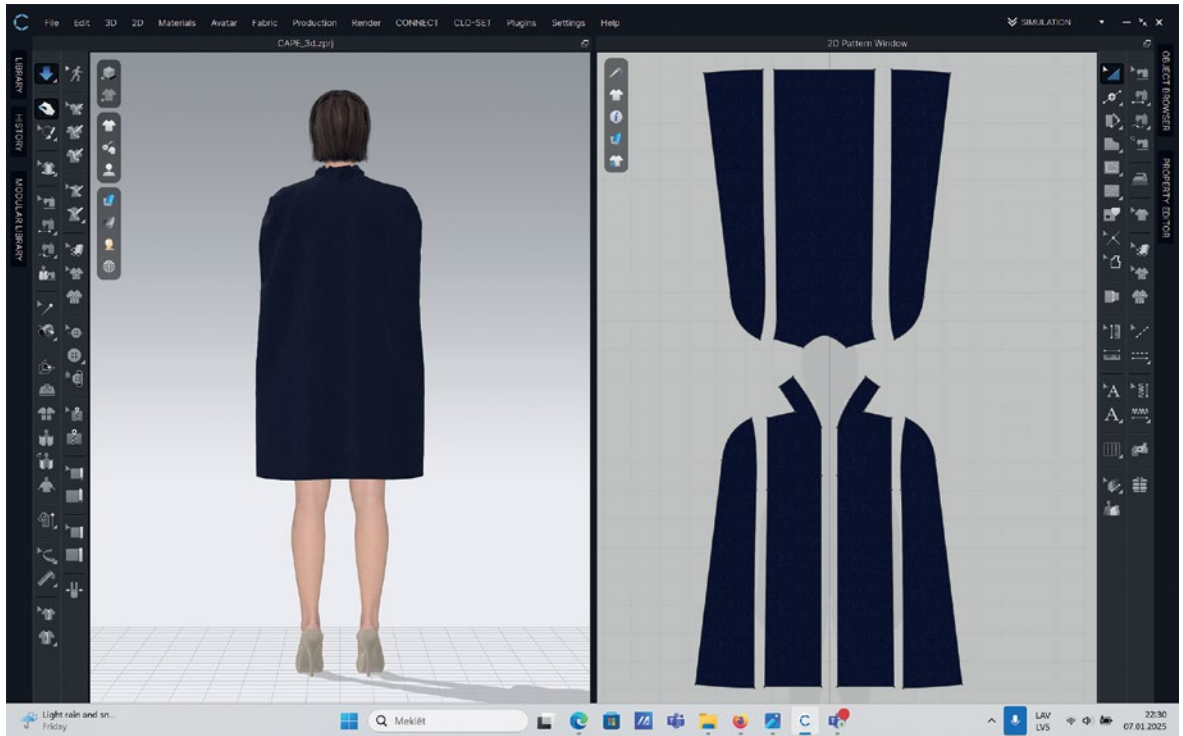Source: own study.

Fig. 6 Developed 3D prototype. Source: own study.

sing their effectiveness in the fashion prototyping process.

It is important to highlight the extensive possibilities offered by 2D computer-aided design (CAD) tools. In the initial phase of prototyping, sketches can be created using any 2D graphic design software and a digital pen, or through specialized programs such as TexDesign, which provide access to a library of pre-made design elements to support idea development and concept visualization (fig. 4).

Following the conceptualization phase, the specialized computer-aided design software AccuMark Gerber is used to develop the garment pattern digitally, eliminating the need for initial hand-drafted paper patterns. The pattern is constructed directly within the software environment, allowing for precise manipulation, refinement, and the generation of all required cutting components and pattern layouts (fig. 5).

Within the software, key features of the pattern are defined and refined. Control points are added to guide construction, measurements are adjusted for accuracy, and the placement of elements such as armholes is specified and additional pattern components — such as facings and lining pieces — are created to complete the garment structure.

3D prototyping allows for the digital development of the model, ensuring that all pattern pieces are accurately aligned and constructed before physical production begins. At this stage, a virtual avatar is selected and customized, appropriate fabric types and physical properties are assigned, and pattern pieces are digitally positioned on the model. A virtual "stitching" process is then carried out to simulate garment assembly, resulting in a realistic 3D prototype (fig. 6).

This enables the designer to assess fit, silhouette, fabric behaviour, and overall design accuracy, making it easier to identify and correct potential issues early in the development process (fig. 7, 8).

The project examines the integration of digital technologies in fashion design, emphasizing their functional application in the design process, their potential to enhance workflow efficiency, and their relevance within educational and research contexts.

The key points of analysis can be divided into three categories:

1. **Technology in Fashion.** 2D and 3D digital tools are transforming fashion design. Software like TexDesign and AccuMark Gerber enables precise pattern making, while 3D simulations help visualize fit and fabric behavior before production.

Fig. 7 Developed 3D prototype. Source: own study.

Fig. 8 Developed 3D prototype. Source: own study.

2. **Efficiency and Workflow.** Digital prototyping improves accuracy and speeds up the design process. It reduces the need for physical samples, allowing designers to iterate rapidly.
3. **Educational Value.** The project highlights the importance of teaching digital skills in fashion. It prepares students for a tech-driven industry and supports innovation through hands-on experimentation.

Advantages and disadvantages of digital technology

Digital technologies in fashion design offer several advantages, including faster design processes, reduced material waste through virtual prototyping, greater creative flexibility, and easier collaboration across teams. Tools like 3D modeling software allow designers to visualize and refine garments without physical samples, promoting both efficiency and sustainability. It is important to choose digital design software based on projects specific needs, as programs vary in complexity and purpose.

However, there are also disadvantages, such as high initial costs for software and training, limited tactile feedback compared to working with real materials, digital footprint and the need for technical skills that may not be part of a traditional design background. Also, it is important to clearly determine the needs of the company and to thoroughly research the possibilities amongst the broad field of technologies.

The field of modern fashion production is realized in a Phygital (physical and digital) environment, where the best advantages of physical production are combined with the possibilities of digital technologies. Under the influence of this environment and in synergy with digital fashion, the professional and material boundaries of designers are becoming fluid, thus transforming the traditional image of the fashion designer [5].

Summary

It is important to emphasize the broad nature of this field as it encompasses diversity in application and integrates a wide range of digital technologies — from 2D and 3D design tools to AI, smart textiles, virtual reality, and wearable tech — each contributing uniquely to different stages of the fashion design and production process and giving the opportunity to designers and manufacturers to truly explore how technologies could influence their business.

The close relationship between modern technologies and the diverse aspects of clothing design and manufacturing highlights the interdisciplinary nature of the field. Technological advancements continue to open new avenues for development — ranging from design and sustainability to smart materials, production processes, entrepreneurship, immersive technologies, and artificial intelligence. As these innovations evolve, they continuously offer fresh solutions and possibilities for the fashion industry.

Innovations in digital fashion are not limited to computer-aided design (CAD) and manufacturing (CAM) but encompass the entire clothing production chain. Successful process development requires a consistent, mutually synchronized system that combines the best advantages of physical production with the capabilities of digital technologies, embracing a Phygital environment.

Each of the technological directions requires extensive research to understand the nuances, advantages, and applications of direction, which, in turn, depends on the capabilities and priorities of the designer/company.

Ilze Bodža
Silvija Mežinska

Bibliography

1. Komarova I., Modes dizains, 2020, https://static1. squarespace.com/static/5f06fd23a667bb31dbca5507/ t/5f58c25c7414073459bb667d/1599652476500/ Modes-dizains.pdf [access: 20.11.2024].

2. Munmun I., A., The Impact of Technology on Fashion Design: From Concept to Creation, 2023, https://ijaem.net/issue_dcp/The%20 Impact%20of%20Technology%20on%20 Fashion%20Design%20%20From%20Concept%20 to%20Creation.pdf [access: 11.12.2024].

3. Fashion and Technology, 2013, https://www. fitnyc.edu/museum/exhibitions/fashion-and-technology.php [access: 02.11.2024].

4. Deniss A., Digital Transformation in Fashion, 2024, https://whatfix.com/blog/digital-transformation-fashion/ [access: 11.11.2024].

5. Sarmakari N., Digital 3D Fashion Designers: Cases of Atacac and The Fabricant, Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture, 2023

6. McKinsey & Company, State of Fashion Technology Report 2022, 2022 [access: 20.10.2024].

7. Byrne F., How Does Technology Impact the World of Fashion, 2023, https://www.fashiondesignacademy. co.uk/blog/how-does-technology-impact-the-world-of-fashion- [access: 11.12.2024].

8. Schneider L., McMillin A., (2023). What are 'phygital' retail experiences, Gifts & Decorative Accessories, Vol. 124, Issue 3, 2024, page 42-42.

9. Technology Meets Textiles: The Future of Fashion Design, 2024, https://www.rmcad.edu/ blog/technology-meets-textiles-the-future-of-fashion-design/ [access: 11.11.2024].

10. The Role of Technology in Modern Fashion Design, 2024, https://www.amordesign.org/ blog/the-role-of-technology-in-modern-fashion-design [access: 16.11.2024].

11. Mežinska, S., (2021). Aspect of collaboration in the design students' involvement in textile laser processing research. 14th International Conference of Education, Research and Innovation. ICERI2021 Proceedings.

12. Mežinska, S., (2021). Research activity of students in the application of laser processing and 3D printing technologies in textile fabrics. Proceedings of the Internacional Conference Society, Integration. Education / Rezekne, Latvia.

SPACE THAT SPEAKS TO ALL.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN AS AN EMPATHY LABORATORY

#universal design #social inclusion #empathy in design #project-based learning

Agata Anacik-Kryza, PhD

Anna Sieroń

Abstract

The article discusses the role of universal design as a tool for developing empathy and social responsibility in design education. It presents teaching experiences from a course for graphic design students that integrates methodology, design thinking and Project-Based Learning. The purpose of the classes is to prepare students for creation of inclusive and accessible solutions.

The evaluation conducted, based on mixed methodology, showed that the course had a positive impact on students' approach to design. As many as 65% of students who have completed the course declared a clear positive change in their approach. These changes included increased awareness of accessibility issues, better understanding of the meaning of empathy and appreciation of the role of research in the design process. Students emphasised that their designs focused on users' actual needs and not on their own creative preferences. They also noticed that designing with disabled persons in mind expanded accessibility for the entire society, including the elderly or parents with children.

A contemporary city may be perceived as a complex communication system – a set of signs, spaces and interactions which, like a book, requires careful reading. However, this metaphoric "page" can be turned over only when the space can actually be accessed by all of its residents – children, senior citizens, people with disabilities. Universal design, developed since 1970s by Ronalda L. Mace, the author of the "Universal Design: Barrier Free Environments for Everyone" concept (1985), offers framework which allows one to think about space not as a common denominator for the "majority" but as a dynamic field of needs and possibilities. In this approach, the designer becomes a mediator between diverse bodies and the structure of the everyday world – and design gains an ethical and social dimension.

This article presents teaching experiences from the universal design course conducted in the field of graphic design in which the design thinking methodology and Project-Based Learning serve as tools for developing empathy, sensitivity to spatial exclusion and professional responsibility. This course has become a space for testing the inclusivity assumptions in the urban context – both through field research with the participation of users, and through prototyping and testing of solutions under real conditions. In the further parts of the article, we present theoretical assumptions, a description of the teaching process, evaluation results, and examples of three

student designs which illustrate how design can become a tool of social change.

Universal design is a fundamental paradigm in the field of design, aimed at creating artifacts, spaces and experiences in a way that ensures their optimal accessibility and functionality for the widest possible spectrum of users. It assumes an elimination of barriers resulting from age, diverse psychophysical abilities or individual preferences, aiming to achieve universal adaptability. The objective of this approach is to incorporate social inclusion, which corresponds with the contemporary understanding of disability that is increasingly perceived not as an inherent feature of an individual but as a consequence of the systemic environment not being adapted to the diverse needs. In the demographic perspective, universal design responds to the challenges of ageing societies which require adaptations of the infrastructure to the needs of elderly people. Moreover, universal design harmonises with the sustainable development principles, contributing to the reduction of social and economic disproportions through the stimulation of social cohesion and counteracting discrimination in the access to resources and services.

The beginnings of the idea of universal design date back to the 1970s, strongly associated with the figure of the American architect Ronald Mace. He was the author of the idea of "design for all", which assumed the need to create architectural structures in a way that takes into account the needs of people with different motor, sensory and cognitive abilities. His works were an impulse for the development of standards and norms in this field. In 1980s, the popularity of this perspective grew thanks to the publication by Victor Papanek entitled "Design for the Real World. Human Ecology and Social Change", in which the author promoted the holistic design paradigm, prioritizing the well-being of humanity and the planet over pure aesthetics or commercial goals.

The 1990s brought about the diversification of the applications of universal design, which went beyond architecture, finding implementation in areas such as industrial design, education and the service sector. The breakthrough moment was the publication of the "Seven Principles of Universal Design" in 1997 by the Universal Design Center in North Carolina, which to this day constitute axioms of this philosophy. Currently, the principles of universal design are supplemented with additional criteria, such as the aesthetic integration with the environment and the support for real integration of people with different abilities, which corresponds to the concept of "perception of equality" formulated by Konrad Kaletsch ("Perception of Equality: Design for Inclusive Environments", Springer, Berlin 2021), as well as the postulate put forward by Kat Holmes, the author of "Mismatch: How Inclusion Shapes Design" (MIT Press, Cambridge 2020), according to which a design should be sensitive to the cultural, linguistic and social context of its users for whom it is being created. Technological progress opens up new

opportunities with regard to the adaptation of solutions to users' diverse needs. Which is more, the adoption of an interdisciplinary approach to design, integrating the knowledge on ergonomics, psychology, sociology and other disciplines, allows the creation of more universal and effective solutions. The key element is also the participative inclusion into the design process of not only industry experts but first and foremost representatives of excluded and marginalised groups. Such approach guarantees that the products designed truly address their actual needs and aspirations. As Ezio Manzini notes in his book "Design, When Everybody Designs: An Introduction to Design for Social Innovation" (Cambridge – London Press, 2015), the future of social innovations in design lies in broad cooperation between both professionals and people from outside the design community. Universal design, as a holistic paradigm, has evolved from its initial "Design for All" concept to becoming an integral part of contemporary user-oriented design, which contributes to the systematic building of a more inclusive and accessible environment for the entire society.

Project-Based Learning: Integration of universal design with an active teaching approach

Project-Based Learning is a method which involves students in solving actual problems and developing skills useful in their professional life, such as critical thinking, cooperation and agency. Learning by doing, as John Dewey wrote, "is life itself" – not just preparation for life.

Universal design, in turn, is based on the creation of products, spaces and services accessible for all, without any need for adaptation. In education this means the planning of inclusive experiences already at the teaching process design stage. This framework, described by David H. Rose and Anne Meyer in their book "Teaching Every Student in the Digital Age" (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria 2002), allows for the involvement of students with different needs and learning styles by offering many ways of expression and participation.

At our university, i.e. SWPS University, Kraków campus, the integration of these approaches is not an extra – it is the basis of the curriculum. Universal design is a mandatory teaching module in the field of applied graphics and multimedia. The classes are spread over two semesters: the

first one is devoted to empathy – students study the needs of different users and analyse existing barriers; the second one focuses on the generation of solutions and testing them. The whole course is provided in accordance with the design thinking methodology which supports iterative nature of the process and experience-based learning.

Students work in interdisciplinary teams, developing designs that address actual social needs – from public spaces to solutions supporting persons with functional limitations. The principles of universal design – such as equitable use, simple and intuitive use, flexibility in use, or tolerance for error – are applied consistently at each stage of the design work.

As Victor Papanek noted, designing is one of the most powerful tools for shaping the world. In our approach, we teach that this tool should be used responsibly – with the widest group of users in mind and with deep understanding of the social context.

Evaluation of universal design classes

The aim of the study was to comprehensively assess the effectiveness, teaching quality and declarative impact of classes on undertaken project activities, analyzed from the perspective of students, diploma candidates and graduates of the university. Particular emphasis was placed on identifying the extent to which the respondents and interviewees integrated the principles of universal design in their theses and everyday professional practice, which is a real measure of knowledge and skills transfer.

The classes were evaluated on the basis of the mixed methodology, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches, in accordance with the principles of triangulation in research described by Norman Denzin in his book "Sociological Methods: A Sourcebook" (Routledge, New York 2017). This combination allows not only for the verification of results from various sources, but also for obtaining a richer, more nuanced picture of the phenomenon analysed.

The quantitative study was population-based – the link to the survey was sent to two research groups: students who had completed universal design classes and those who were in the first semester of the subject.

Under the qualitative phase of the survey, 13 individual in-depth interviews were carried out

Fig. 1 Inclusive playground design. Authors: Justyna Senderek, Wiktoria Springer, Ewelina Wojas, Agnieszka Wojtanowska.

in total. Interview invitees included persons who consciously implemented the principles of universal design in their dissertation.

Nearly 57% of the students taking part in the survey declared that a clear positive change took place in their approach to design under the influence of the classes. Among the students who successfully completed the course, this percentage was even higher, reaching 65%. The positive changes observed in the approach to design included: significantly increased awareness of accessibility, in-depth understanding of the importance of empathy in the entire design process, adoption of the principles of inclusive design as an intrinsic work standard, better understanding of the complexity of how the design is received by various user groups, as well as appreciation of the key role of reliable research in design. The course effectively changes students' approach to design, which constitutes clear evidence of its long-term value in the education of future specialists in the field of design.

The graduates and diploma students implemented the principles of universal design in their final works to varying degrees. For some of them, universal design constituted the central conceptual framework which determined and organised the entire creative process, whereas for others these principles constituted an important, though supplementary, element of their design methodology. However, all interviewees agreed that their projects were not focused on their own creative preferences, but on the real and diverse needs of the user, prioritizing usability and functionality over aesthetic values.

Respondents consistently stressed that designing with disabled persons in mind automatically expanded accessibility for the general public, including also such groups as the elderly or parents with small children. They also pointed out less obvious but just as important user groups, such as: children, people speaking languages other than the dominant one, or women who often are not included on a standard basis in the context of exclusion.

The most valuable elements in the curriculum, according to the interviewees, included: the opportunity to delve into the principles of universal design in detail and become aware of its critical importance for contemporary design, the importance of research experience, learning new techniques and analytical tools (and the possibility of their practical application in real projects), as well as a comprehensive analysis of accessibility and inclusivity through systematic observation of physical and digital spaces.

The interviewees clearly saw that learning universal design translated into more inclusive design thinking and deeper awareness of ensuring accessibility and functionality for all users. This knowledge constitutes for them a solid basis in the understanding of the full design cycle and shapes the ability to thoroughly analyse needs. It develops empathy and sensitivity to requirements of diverse user groups, which in consequence leads to the creation of design solutions that are more sustainable and ethical. The diploma students and graduates surveyed are aware that universal design addresses the growing needs of the contemporary world and provides them with a significant competitive advantage in the labour market.

Student design: universal playground

The design by students Justyna Senderek, Wiktoria Springer, Ewelina Wojas and Agnieszka Wojtanow-

ska constitutes an example of how design thinking is used in the designing of public space accessible for children with diverse developmental and functional needs (Illustration 1, universal design classes conducted by the authors of the article).

The starting point was the research conducted at the empathising stage – the students identified the needs and barriers encountered by children in the urban space. The inspiration for the diagnosis were previous design experiences, including the design safari exercise – an exploratory method consisting in the observation of space from the point of view of people at risk of exclusion, which made the students more sensitive to the absence of inclusive solutions in the urban infrastructure. Children of different ages participated in the research, which enabled the students to capture many perspectives.

Field studies were also an important element of the process, including observations and interviews with the children and their guardians, the results of which have been analysed and collated in a research plan encompassing the identification of users and the analysis of data collected. On their basis the students defined the most important user needs such as the need for diverse motor activity, sensory integration, rest, and spatial orientation.

The ideation stage resulted in numerous ideas, which were then verified in the prototyping phase. The universal playground model created included a multi-level climbing structure, a swing, a tunnel-slide, sensory musical elements, and a sand pit, as well as visually diverse surface with colourful forms playing the role of orientation points. Students realise that the chessboard layout does not meet the universal design requirements – it was used in the prototype solely to enable the authors to explain and visualize during usability tests how the substrate would work when it also took on an informational role.

The solutions proposed included:
- well-thought-out functional zones corresponding to different forms of activity (motor, sensory, social),
- visual and physical accessibility of play elements,
- leisure elements and introduction of greenery,
- clear and attractive spatial layout inspired by the need for exploration.
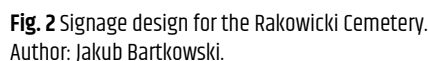
The design is an example of a socially sensitive approach to urban space and provides an excellent illustration for the application of the principles of universal design in educational practice. The students have designed a play area which does not segregate children according to their level of fitness but encourages shared activity and cooperation. The principles of equitable use, flexibility in use and size and space for approach and use are clearly being implemented. The sensory and visual diversity of elements supports orientation in space and social development of children. The inclusion of the social context also constitutes a significant value of the design – the playground has been designed as a place for integration, not rehabilitation, which is in line with the principle of cultural and linguistic sensitivity. Despite the very good level of attention to detail in the concept, the design could be developed further with regard to the principles of "tolerance for error" and "simple and intuitive use"", e.g. by developing safety markings or instructions for use in more detail. Despite these minor shortcomings, the concept is very mature and cohesive, showing that inclusivity could be the foundation of an aesthetic, accessible and socially meaningful design.

Assessment of the implementation of universal design principles: 7/8

The design constitutes an example of the practical application of the principles of universal design in design education, with the simultaneous development of soft competences, such as empathy, ability to cooperate and communicate. Thanks to the inclusion of actual users and the iterative nature of the work, the students have developed a solution which may be a starting point for the implementation, and at the same time fits into the didactic goals of educating empathetic designers and designers aware of the role of accessibility in public space.

Diploma design: universal design in the space of the Rakowicki Cemetery

Jakub Bartkowski's diploma work, carried out in the diploma studio of Oksana Shmygol and Julian Wierzchowski, is an example of implementation of the principles of universal design in public spaces of particular cultural and historical value. The topic of the project was to design a spatial

Fig. 2 Signage design for the Rakowicki Cemetery.
Author: Jakub Bartkowski.

information system and visual identification for the Rakowicki Cemetery in Kraków, taking into account the needs of people at risk of spatial exclusion, using an approach based on empathy and co-design with users with diverse functional needs, which is in line with the assumptions of universal design (Illustration 2).

The starting point was the analysis of public infrastructure accessibility barriers identified during an earlier design safari exercise. These observations initiated an in-depth identification of the needs of users – including persons in wheelchairs, the elderly, carers of children and people with sensory disabilities.

An important stage of the design process were research walks – a qualitative method enabling the researchers to directly experience the space and identify user problems. The diploma student, accompanying representatives of target groups, had an opportunity to directly experience challenges connected with moving around the cemetery. He noticed, among other things, the absence of information about accessible toilets – which for people with reduced mobility is a key aspect when planning a visit.

The field research was of exploratory and participative nature, which enabled the author of the design to verify the project assumptions in the spirit of universal design in which the testing of hypotheses takes place through contacts with actual users and not solely through own assumptions. Simultaneously, a comparative analysis was conducted – of both digital and physical information systems in similar public spaces in other cities (Warsaw, Łódź). The conclusions indicated a lack of awareness of people with disabilities among cemetery managers, which reflects a broader phenomenon observed in many institutions where people with disabilities are not treated as equal users of space, which results in their marginalization in infrastructural projects.

The solutions proposed included:
- maps and boards with lists of graves, designed to meet various user needs (e.g. high-contrast versions for the elderly and visually impaired, translations for non-Polish speakers),
- signs indicating architectural barriers and accessible toilets have been developed taking into account the principles of information design, including appropriate contrast, content hierarchy, selection of icons, font size and availability of lighting, directional signs in Polish and English,

Fig. 3 Design of a guide book for the John Paul II Airport in Balice. Author: Daria Łabędź.

• visual identification inspired by architectural details – stained glass windows from the cemetery chapel.

Jakub Bartkowski's diploma work deserves particular recognition due to the combination of cultural sensitivity with accessibility requirements. The author designed a spatial information and visual information system for the Rakowicki Cemetery by integrating functionality with reflection on user experience in the space of commemoration and sacrum. The design implements well the principles of equitable use, simple and intuitive use, perceptible information and cultural sensitivity – particularly through the use of high-contrast maps, pictograms, translations, and reference to the architectural details of the cemetery. The comparative analysis of solutions from other cities and the empirical identification of architectural barriers in the field also constitute

a big advantage. The design could also be developed with regard to the principles of "low physical effort" and "tolerance for error", e.g. by designing rest areas or clearer marking of zones that are hard to access. Despite this, the work represents a high level of social sensitivity and professionalism, combining the functional dimension with the symbolic and cultural one.

Assessment of the implementation of universal design principles: 6,5/8.

The Public Transport Board in Kraków has evaluated the design positively and expressed its readiness to assume supervision over its implementation. This example shows how the universal design practice could be implemented effectively on the educational level through the contact with actual users and through inclusion of their experiences, which increases the chances for the solutions developed being implemented and un-

derscores the value of qualitative research in the educational process.

Diploma design: Neurodiversity-Friendly Airport

The diploma work by Daria Łabędź, prepared in the studio of Zuzanna Łazarewicz and Kinga Blaschke, constitutes an example of the application of universal design in an environment with a high level of stimuli and complex spatial organisation. The design concerned the creation of a system supporting the independence of adults with an autism spectrum disorder within the Kraków-Balice airport, using an approach based on empathy and co-design with users with different functional needs, which is in line with the assumptions of universal design. (Illustration 3).

The design was inspired by the cooperation with the Aviation Education Centre (Centrum Edukacji Lotniczej) and the personal experiences of the student as a highly sensitive person, as well as the involvement of target group representatives and their readiness to cooperate highlight the importance of the social rooting of the design process. At the first stage, a series of in-depth interviews with neurodiverse adults was conducted because this type of method allows the capture of nuances in the users' experiences, particularly in groups characterised by neurodiversity. The diploma student developed her own research scenario, focusing on clear language, open-ended questions and non-directive approach, in accordance with the assumptions of universal design which promotes a shift away from the designer's own beliefs towards work based on research data.

The diploma student developed her own research scenario, focusing on clear language, open-ended questions and non-directive approach, in accordance with the assumptions of universal design which promotes a shift away from the designer's own beliefs towards work based on research data.

Based on the material collected, a set of solutions was designed to support independent movement around the terminal, including:
- step-by-step instructions for the most frequent travel scenarios,
- information boards with a simplified structure,
- set of original graphic icons,
- the navigation system has been based on the principle of spatial stress reduction, as predic-

tability and limitation of stimuli are crucial for people with cognitive difficulties functioning in environments with a high level of sensory stimulation.

Each of these elements was subject to utility testing with representatives of the target group. The student tested physical mockups, analysing their understandability and functionality in a real context, because testing with users in the target environment significantly increases the relevance and usability of the designed solutions.

The work by Daria Łabędź stands out due to its deep empathy and understanding of contemporary challengers connected with neurodiversity. The design, addressed to adults on the autism spectrum, shows how universal design can support independence, reduce stress and improve the comfort of moving around in a space with high intensity of stimuli. The author implemented almost all the principles of universal design, in particular those relating to flexibility in use, simple and intuitive use, perceptible information as well as cultural and social sensitivity. The set of original icons, step-by-step instructions and simplified information boards has been tested with representatives of the target group, which confirms the effectiveness of the proposed solutions. The ethical dimension of the research also constitutes a high value of the project – it relies on empathy and trust-based relations. In the future, the aspect of the users' physical contact (e.g. reference to rest area, lighting, acoustics) could be developed in order to fully implement the principle of "low physical effort". The design is an example of a mature, empathetic and socially aware design in which visual communication becomes the tool of real inclusion.

Assessment of the implementation of universal design principles: 7,5/8.

In the research process, the student faced concerns related to communication – both her own and that of the respondents. As she admits, she had discovered many shared features with her interviewees, which enabled her to build empathy-based relationships. The stress-coping strategies described by the participants were a particular source of inspiration – unobvious but effective, such as looking at cheeses in a supermarket, drinking coffee "to calm down", or walking barefoot – they show that unobvious emotional regulation strategies can be inspiring

for the creation of low-threshold, empathetic design solutions.

The project has become for the student an opportunity to develop her research competences and reflect on the role of a designer in the social context. The activities completed show that design education may effectively support the building of social sensitivity, and solutions designed for one group may be useful for many because design education based on actual social challenges supports the development of the social sensitivity and design responsibility competences.

Summary

Universal design, as an interdisciplinary and evolving paradigm, combines ethical, social and aesthetic reflection in a single design process. Its development – from Ronalda L. Mace's architectural initiatives, through Victora Papanek's postulates concerning the designer's responsibility towards the planet and society, to contemporary social practices described by Ezio Manzini – shows that, today, design is becoming a tool of developing a more equal and inclusive world. The addition of the eighth principle – cultural, linguistic and social sensitivity – widens this paradigm, emphasising the need to allow for various user contexts and to shift away from universalism towards empathic design pluralism.

In design teaching, universal design takes on special meaning as a tool for teaching social competences, empathy and professional responsibility. Combining it with the design thinking methodology and the Project-Based Learning approach enables the students to learn by doing, and, at the same time, understand design as a process based on research, reflection and co-creation. The course completed shows that interdisciplinary and iterative teaching approach develops both design skills and ethical attitudes – teaching students to listen, observe, test

and adjust their own assumptions in response to users' actual needs.

The results of evaluation of the universal design classes confirm their transformational impact on students' awareness. Both the quantitative and qualitative data show that the participation in the course lead to a permanent change in thinking about design – from individual expression towards a social goal. Students declared an increase in empathy, greater understanding of the meaning of accessibility, as well as perception of user studies as the key stage of the design process. In the opinion of the graduates and diploma students, universal design not only expands the workshop but also constitutes a distinctive competence in professional work and facilitates communication with various user groups.

The analysis of three student designs described – the inclusive playground, the spatial information system for the Rakowicki Cemetery, and the Neurodiversity-Friendly Airport design – shows that the universal design principles may be effectively applied in the designing of both physical spaces and visual communication systems. All three designs confirm that design based on cooperation with users leads to the creation of actually useful and ethically rooted solutions.

The playground (7/8) – combines cultural sensitivity with perceptible information, constituting an example of a balanced dialogue between the commemoration of a place and needs of contemporary users.

The Rakowicki Cemetery (6,5/8) – combines cultural sensitivity with perceptible information, constituting an example of a balanced dialogue between the commemoration of a place and needs of contemporary users.

The airport design (7,5/8) – develops the principles of simple use, predictability and stress reduction

by proposing solutions based on empathy and co--creation together with neurodiverse people.

Together, these designs show that the application of the eight principles of universal design promotes the creation of solutions which not only increase accessibility but also enrich the user's experience by building a space for shared participation and understanding. The common denominator of these activities is the conviction that universal design does not limit creativity – on the contrary, it becomes the source of innovation and reflection about the social role of design.

To sum up, teaching experiences and results of studies show that design education focused on universal design plays a transformative role – it changes the way students think about design, expands the scope of their empathy and develops ethical professional attitudes. It teaches responsibility for the shape of social and spatial environment in which we live. Universal design, transferred to the field of education, is not just a method – it becomes an attitude that makes it possible to build a more just, inclusive and empathetic world. ◾

Agata Anacik-Kryza, PhD
Anna Sieroń

Bibliography

1. Denzin, N.: Sociological Methods: A Sourcebook. Routledge, New York (2017).
2. Dewey, J.: Experience and Education. Macmillan, New York (1938).
3. Holmes, K.: Mismatch: How Inclusion Shapes Design. MIT Press, Cambridge (2020).
4. Kaletsch, K.: Perception of Equality: Design for Inclusive Environments. Springer, Berlin (2021).
5. Mace, R.L.: Universal Design: Barrier Free Environments for Everyone. The Center for Universal Design, North Carolina State University, Raleigh (1985).
6. Manzini, E.: Design, When Everybody Designs: An Introduction to Design for Social Innovation. MIT Press, Cambridge (2015).
7. Papanek, V.: Dizajn dla realnego świata. Środowisko człowieka i zmiana społeczna. Wydawnictwo d2d.pl, Kraków (2023).
8. Rose, D.H., Meyer, A.: Teaching Every Student in the Digital Age. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria (2002).

Sztuka czarno-biała

Zenon Balcer · Sylwia Caban-Wiater · Piotr Janowczyk · Aneta ·
Jaźwińska · Justyna Kabala · Anna Kłos · Dominika Korzeniowska
Piotr Krochmalski · Luiza Kwiatkowska · Bartosz Mamak ·
Joanna Mankiewicz · Dariusz Mlącki · Anna Nowokuńska-
Maksymiuk · Janusz Pabel · Michał Piekarski · Grzegorz
Rogala · Ryszard Sekuła · Małgorzata Sobocińska-Kiss ·
Rafał Strent · Wiesław Szamborski · Mieczysław Wasilewski

Kuratorka: Magdalena Furmanik-Kowalska

2-31 sierpień 2025   Galeria Lufcik Warszawa ul. Mazowiecka 11a

Light and Shadow, Emptiness and Fullness

on the art of black and white

The exhibition presents works by twenty-one artists — lecturers at the WIT Academy — representing various genres and techniques. It serves as a bridge between traditional art and technology, perfectly reflecting the synergy that shapes contemporary creative approaches.

The four categories into which the works have been grouped are not identical with the technological division. The themes of individual sections refer to the condition of both the human being and the surrounding matter.

Psychological, social, and symbolic references accumulate across the works, regardless of the technique chosen by each artist.

By abandoning vivid color in favor of chiaroscuro and strong contrasts, we reach the very essence of the artists' intentions.

In Western culture, opposites are in constant conflict — good fights evil, light struggles against darkness. This metaphysical dualism is reflected in art, particularly evident in the Baroque era.

Christ and the saints emerge from the darkness of interiors, caves, or dense foliage. On Saint Paul's Feast Day, divine light of conversion flows through Caravaggio's paintings. From Rembrandt's prophetess Anna emanates the radiance of wisdom and understanding. White is light; black is shadow. The concept is different in Eastern traditions, where opposites complement each other rather than clash.

In Taoism, the feminine yin, associated with darkness and matter, is completed by the masculine yang, which represents light, space, and the void symbolized by white.

Landscapes composed by ancient Eastern masters reveal this harmony. Black lines — brushstrokes — and the whiteness of paper or silk interact. They create a dynamic interplay between fullness and emptiness, materiality and spirituality.

Contemporary artists draw inspiration from both traditions, as best exemplified by the works presented in the exhibition "The Art of Black and White."

Although in European tradition the term originally referred to workshop graphics — from mezzotint and woodcut to lithography and linocut — today it is most often used in the context of photography.

This exhibition aims to challenge that notion, showing that in every modern artistic medium — whether classical painting, printmaking, or digital works — the interaction of opposites, black and white, remains essential. The image constructed through contrast evokes strong emotions and powerfully engages the viewer's senses.

The monochromatic nature of the works may also serve as a respite from the flood of highly commercialized and overly intense stimuli that surround us in urban and virtual space.

THE SHAPE OF MAN

"Where are you going?" ask the ephemeral faces from Mieczysław Wasilewski's poster, opening the exhibition with simplicity and poignancy. Their minimalist directness finds an echo in Piotr Krochmalski's drawing inscribed with the words "Direction: Rome."

This is a satire on modern relationships between humans and animals, yet also a metaphor for consumerism. Małgorzata Sobocińska-Kiss likewise explores interpersonal connections, revealing both stylized and expressive figures drawn through a diversity of lines. Their multiplicity and comic-like quality allow each viewer to create a personal narrative about the depicted characters.

"Innocence Happens on the Way Home" is the title of a painting by Sylwia Caban-Wiater. Although rooted in everyday life, it takes on a distinctly metaphysical tone. The human figures arranged in sequence resemble a ladder of generations—or perhaps people we pass in our lives. Are they walking into shadow or toward the light? The oil painting arouses curiosity and gentle unease, offering no definitive answer.

Each viewer must decide for themselves. Ambiguity also permeates the works of Aneta Jaźwińska. Her images of children looking directly at us, captured in moments of play, lack carefree joy. Their faces appear too mature. The human image, both literally and metaphorically, is brought to a close by Piotr Janowczyk's film.
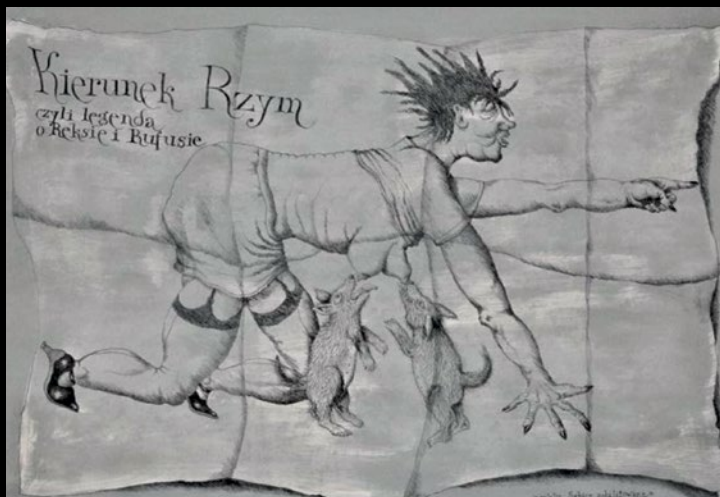
The artist records classical dance, inscribing the performers into geometric forms. White straight lines surround human silhouettes, constructing complex structures whose shapes transform with every motion of the dancers' bodies.
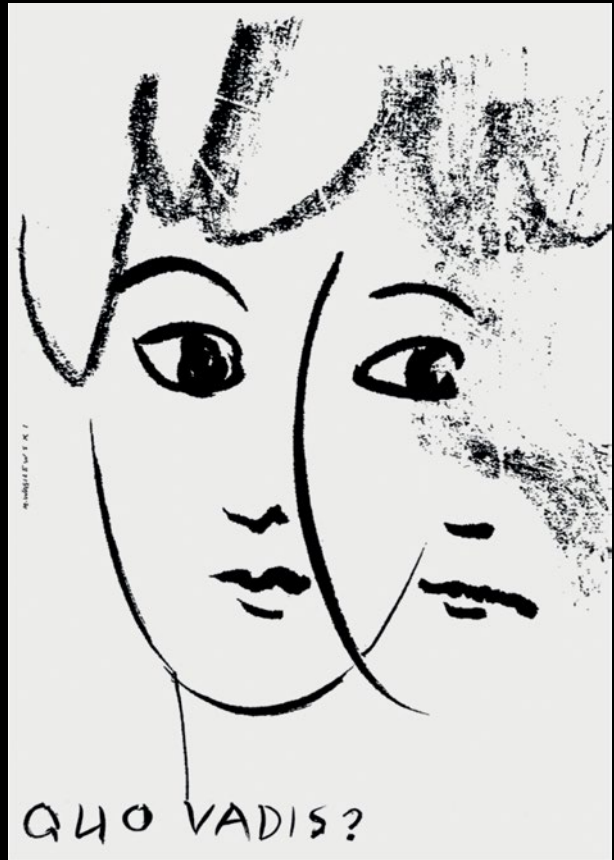
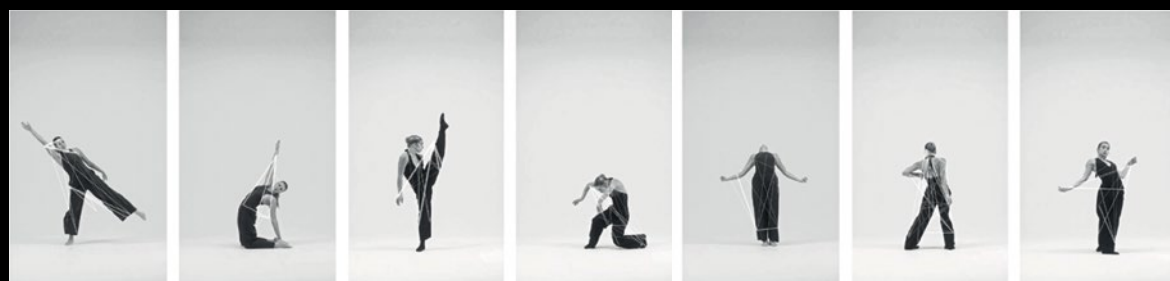**Mieczysław Wasilewski** | Quo vadis? | 2025
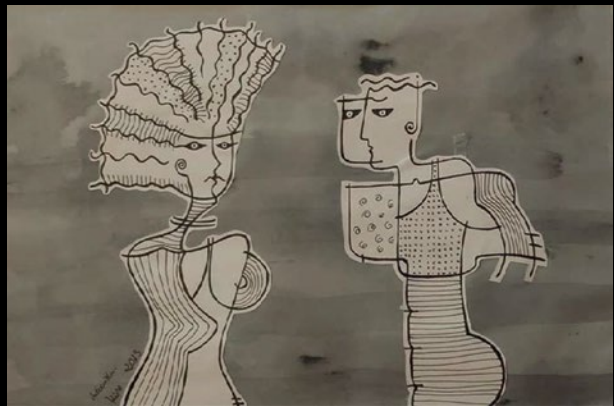
Małgorzata Sobocińska-Kiss | Venus and Mars | 2013

Piotr Krochmalski | Direction Rome | 2016

Aneta jaźwińska | Girl | 2025

Piotr Janowczyk | Body lines 02 | 2024

Sylwia Caban-Wiater | Innocence happens on the way home | 2025

SIGNS OF WRITING

In these works, nature serves as an inspiration, though it is transformed into a universal message. It also raises questions about the future of humanity. Symbol and image intertwine in posters, collages, and compositions.

In Bartosz Mamak's work, simplified human silhouettes drawn with black lines merge into letters forming the word fentanyl. This potent painkiller easily leads to addiction and often to death. The poster thus becomes both commentary and warning, as well as a visual metaphor for an alternative—its figures perform movements reminiscent of physical exercises. Perhaps the viewer will notice that the forms themselves carry a different, hidden meaning.

Ludmila Kwiatkowska inscribes cats into graphic signs. Their softness harmonizes with the sinuosity of lines forming ovals, circles, and semicircles—akin to the animal figures in the paintings of Franz Marc (1880–1916). Quadrupeds,

humanity's companions, also play a significant role in Grzegorz Rogala's digital graphics. The artist constructs shelves resembling medieval altars or museum vitrines, containing extraordinary natural specimens—hybrids of human and animal, or interspecies creatures. Enclosed within frames, frozen in stillness, they fascinate through their strangeness.

These works also pose questions about humanity's future. Nature likewise inspires Michał Piekarski, though in his art it takes on typographic form. His wordplay, arranged with deliberate precision, creates visual poetry rooted in medieval manuscripts yet most vividly realized by the Fluxus artists. Piekarski paints with words.
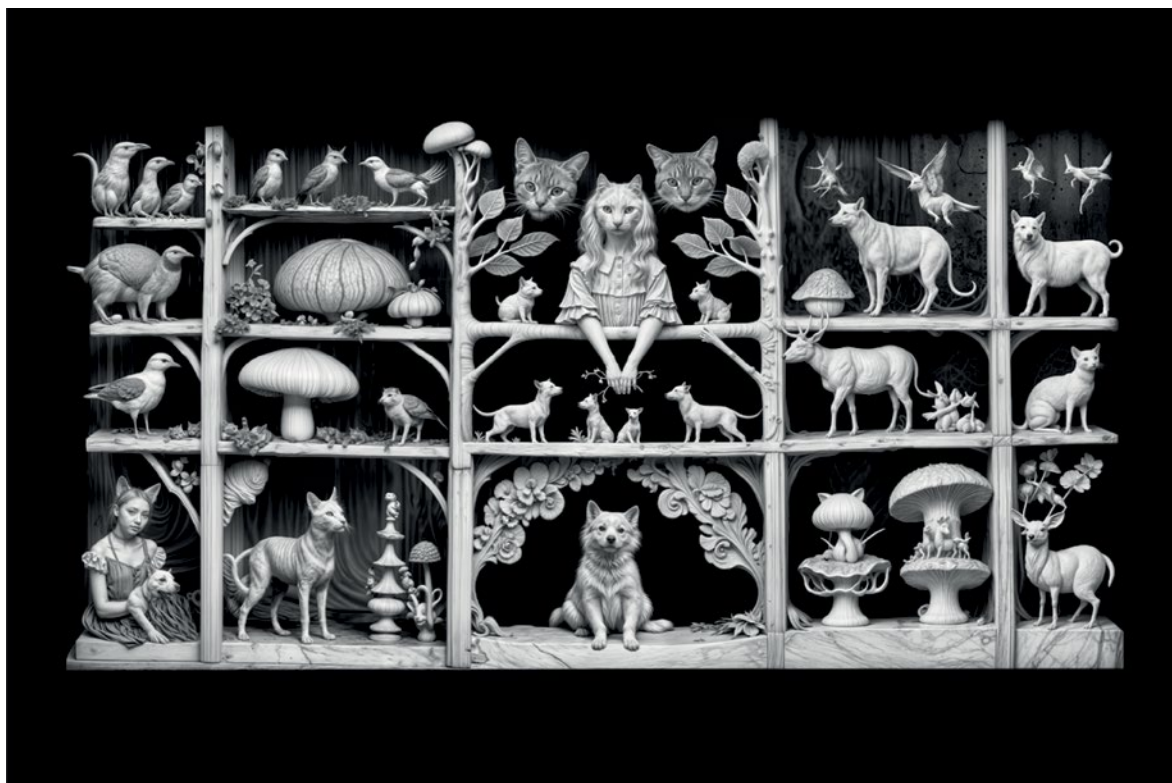
Justyna Kabala and Anna Kłos, in turn, intertwine letters and words with visual forms. The former creates drawings; the latter composes collages from fragments of old newspapers, letters, leaflets, book pages, and other found materials. In both cases, a successful synergy of signs emerges.

Bartosz Mamak | Fentanyl | 2025

Luiza Kwiatkowska | Curious cat | 2021

Grzegorz Rogala | Fairy tales and fables | 2025

Michał Piekarski
Acacias | 2020

Justyna Kabala
Aphrodite of Capua | 2021

Anna Kłos | La geometria fantastica | 2021

THE GEOMETRIZATION OF CHAOS

The artists' compositions speak of an attempt to impose order on what is irregular, fluid, and undefined. The first arranges strips cut from black and white paper so that their uneven shapes form a rectangle — an effort to tame the untamable chaos, a metaphor for the movement and transformation of the world.

Another artist inscribes biomorphic forms into grids or aligns seemingly uniform solids in ordered sequences. The last of the creators multiplies and simplifies the depicted objects so that they become abstract patterns — stencils rather than tangible entities.

In contrast to Ryszard Sekuła's strategy of unifying the subject in his art, Zenon Balcer deconstructs and fragments it. Beams of light, captured in photographic frames, are digitally modified by the artist.

The introduced glitches alter perception through geometrization. Nature's soft forms are simplified by cold, digital algorithms. Yet in Rafał Strent's Memory, the opposite process occurs. An ordered structure, influenced by the circular motion of an object, collapses into disarray — much like our neatly arranged memories that, when stirred by unexpected stimuli, come alive and intertwine.
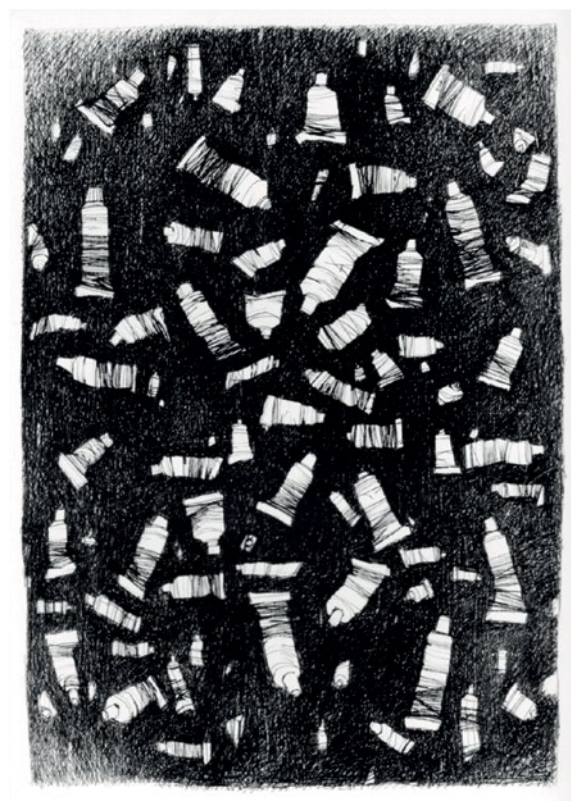
Zenon Balcer | Echo of light 2 | 2025
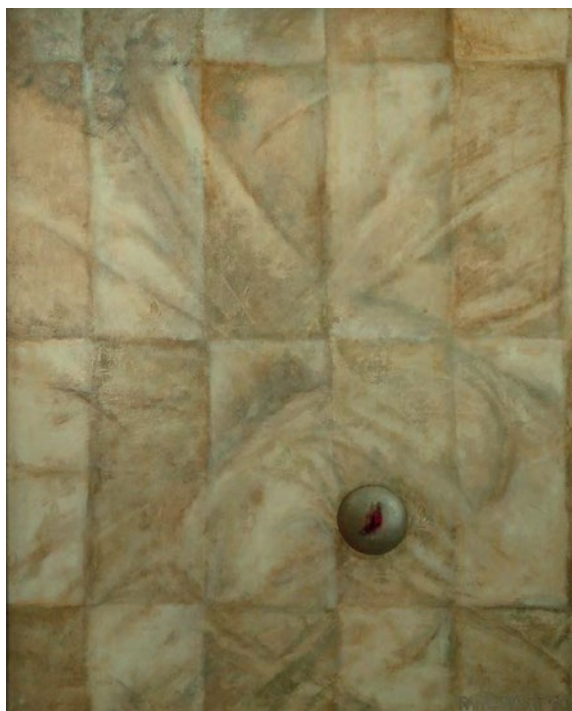
Rafał Strent | Memory | 1990

Janusz Pabel | Dream vision | 2005

Anna Nowokuńska-Maksymiuk | No. 3 from the Gridometry series | 2023


Ryszard Sekuła | Details | 2015

STRUCTURES OF NATURE

Nature delights in creating patterns that it repeats infinitely. Seemingly identical natural structures, when observed closely, reveal their individuality and uniqueness. Every snowflake differs, every feather, shell, lichen, or grain of sand… These similarities and differences inspire the works of Dariusz Mlącki, Dominika Korzeniowska, and Joanna Mankiewicz.

Drawing on Dadaist tradition, the first artist presents objects "made" from unconventional materials. Instead of paper, an envelope is crafted from bird feathers, acquiring metaphorical meaning. Repeated feathers form decorative structures, while abstract circular forms become ornamental elements in Korzeniowska's graphics.

Following the horror vacui principle, they evenly cover the entire surface, like organic life forms inhabiting inorganic matter. They evoke fossils or the interiors of fractured stones. Stylistically akin to Mankiewicz's paintings, yet unlike Korzeniowska's static and monumental works, Mankiewicz's compositions are full of motion. Formed of white and gray dots on a black background, they evoke various associations — from human tissues and blood vessels seen under a microscope to nocturnal landscapes viewed from above. They illustrate the resemblance between micro- and macrocosm, resonating with Eastern Taoist thought.

In Wiesław Szamborski's painting, small spots become light, while simplified floral forms take on spatial abstraction. Flowers enveloping the branches of blooming meadowsweet create three--dimensional natural structures. ∎
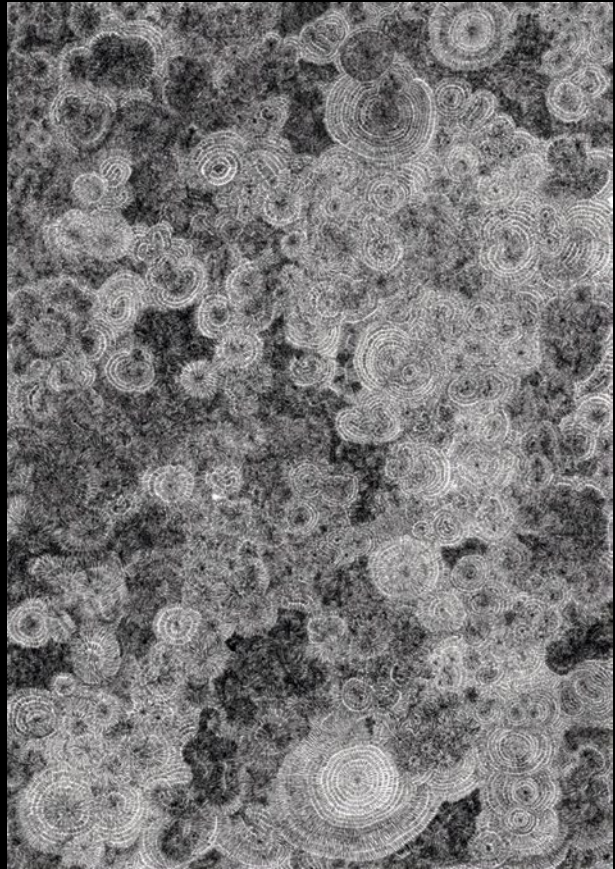
Dominika Korezniowska | Expansion from the Monocultures series | 2023

Wiesław Szamborski | Spirea | 2007

Dariusz Mlącki | Feather Envelope | 2024

Joanna Mankiewicz | Persistent existence | 2020

Silvija Mežinska
Lecturer, researcher, and director of the study program Fashion Design and Technology at Riga Technical University Rezekne Academy (formerly Rezekne Academy of Technologies). Has completed internships at several European universities. Research and practical results have been summarized in 14 publications presented at conferences in Latvia and abroad. Research interests include materials research, advanced technologies in clothing, and design innovations in education.
ORCID: 0009-0003-2089-454X

Ilze Bodža
Lecturer at Riga Technical University Rezekne Academy, teaching design-oriented courses such as Digital Technologies in Design, Applied Graphics and Font, Interior Sketching, among others. Academic and professional interests focus on interior and graphic design, as well as design education and broader aspects of visual communication. In addition to academic work, actively involved in curating international design exhibitions and coordinating student participation in international exchange projects.
ORCID: 0009-0001-1911-7204

Justyna Staśkiewicz-Jonak, PhD
Teaches photography at the WIT Academy in Warsaw. Engages in painting, printmaking, ceramic sculpture, and photography. Seeks a contemporary visual language through traditional techniques such as oil painting, printmaking, and majolica. Focuses on color, tone, and contrast, drawing inspiration from organic forms and landscapes. Combines media in experimental works, including ceramic paintings.

Tamara Pathak
Artist, photographer, lecturer. Born in Vilnius, Lithuania. Graduated Art History, Theory and Critics bachelor in Vytautas Magnus University, masters of photography and Media Arts in Vilnius academy of Arts. The axis of her creativity focuses on the theme of body representation, and the artistic research of the Absent body has been ongoing for several years.

Ingrida Bagočiūnienė, PhD
Lecturer at Kaunas College and Vilnis Academy of Arts, and a gilding restorer at the Pranas Gudynas Restoration Centre of the Lithuanian National Museum of Art. Professional activity focuses on cultural heritage communication and educational practices aimed at connecting restoration processes with wider audiences.
ORCID: 0009-0001-8786-6565

Aina Strode, PhD
Associate professor and leading researcher at Riga Technical University Rezekne Academy, delivers study courses for future designers, construction engineers, and teachers, member of the Latvian Designers' Union. Research interests – design in interdisciplinary research; design thinking in education. Author and reviewer of international scientific publications.
ORCID: 0000-0001-9702-5834

Diāna Apele
Assistant professor and researcher, director of the professional bachelor's study program "Design Technologies" at Riga Technical University Rezekne Academy, artist and interior designer, member of the Latvian Designers' Union. Research interests – interdisciplinary design research, while in the field of art he is interested in the integration of technology into classical art forms – graphics and photography, and is fascinated by conceptual art. Author of international scientific publications, organizer and participant of master classes, conferences, projects, art and design exhibitions.

Ineta Auzāne
Head of the Interior Design Education programme and professional subjects teacher at art education competence centre "Daugavpils secondary school of design and arts SAULES SKOLA", interior design teacher at Latgale Industrial Technical School. She has always been interested in graphical design and photography. For the past 5 years, she has been actively involved in exploration and popularization of Latvian cultural heritage, especially of Latgale region, through photography.

Eglė Aleknaitė, PhD
Heritage professional and academic lecturer specializing in the conservation and restoration of easel paintings. Experienced in museum curation, historical research, and cultural project management. Professional activity focuses on preserving artistic heritage and developing educational initiatives that connect conservation practice with public engagement and interdisciplinary research.
ORCID: 0009-0002-3750-7780

Agata Anacik-Kryza, PhD
Sociologist, cultural anthropologist, social researcher, and assistant professor at the Interdisciplinary Faculty of SWPS University in Kraków. Academic work focuses on alternative design doctrines and universal design, with particular emphasis on design for neurodiverse individuals and on research within the design process. Research interests also include inclusive language and its application in social practice.
ORCID: 0009-0000-6981-393X
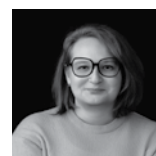
Anna Sieroń
Social researcher and UX researcher, cultural studies scholar, theatre scholar, designer, and PhD candidate at the Faculty of Graphic Design of the Academy of Fine Arts in Katowice. Also works as an assistant at the Interdisciplinary Faculty of SWPS University in Kraków. Research interests focus on universal design and social inclusion, emphasizing the importance of understanding diverse social needs to create accessible and functional solutions. Explores the role of design in education, public space, and assistive technologies. Currently develops the MeeTypes project on typography education in Poland.
ORCID: 0009-0007-1611-4837

AUTHORS

UP
GROWTH
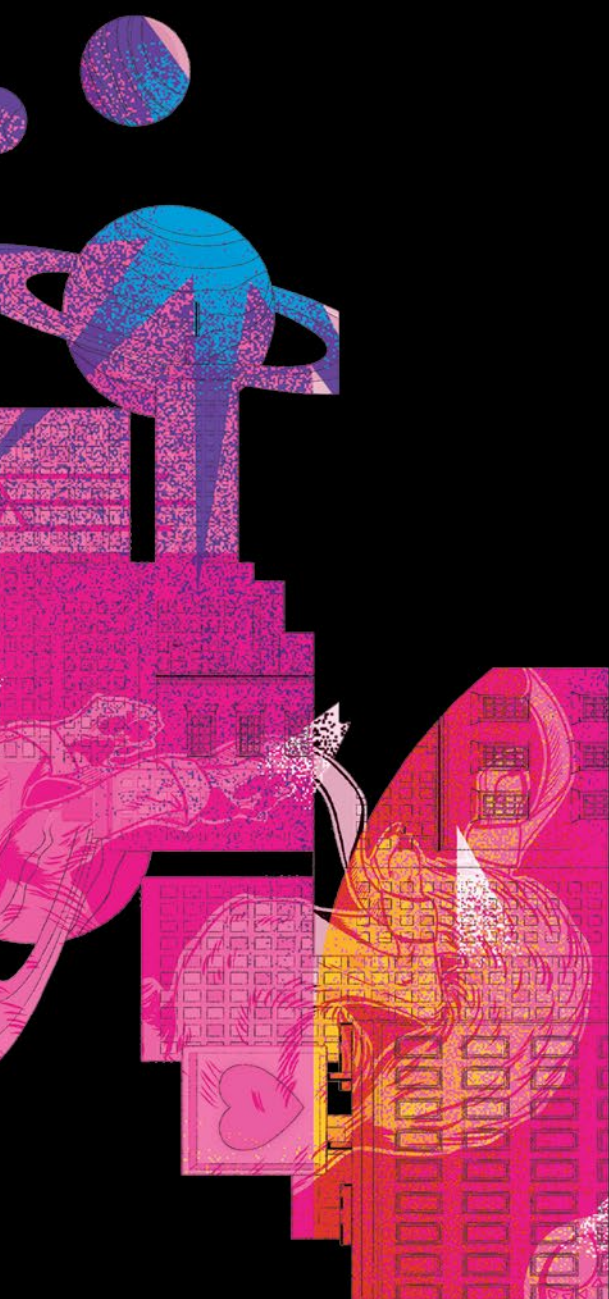
WIT
THE BEST
DIPLOMAS

Discover
the world
of young
creators

UPGROWTH is more than an exhibition
– it's a story of artistic growth
and imagination without limits.

Each year, we present diploma projects
distinguished for their **quality,
originality, and attention to detail**.

The exhibition opening takes place every year in October at Galeria WIT, 6 Gizów Street, Warsaw.
Virtual exhibition available at **www.dyplomy.wit.edu.pl**

AKADEMIA**WIT**

Time for studies – time for a good choice

The WIT Academy is a recognised and respected institution on the Polish educational market, offering modern programmes of study tailored to the dynamically changing requirements of employers.

- Lecturers with academic knowledge and professional experience
- Laboratories equipped with the latest hardware and software
- Programmes developed in cooperation with industry leaders
- Diplomas valued by employers in Poland and abroad

An educational offer matched to your needs

At the WIT Academy you can develop your skills at every stage of your professional career:

- **Bachelor's studies (first cycle)**
- **Engineering studies (first cycle)**
- **Master's studies (second cycle)**
- **Post-graduate studies**

Design your future!

wit.edu.pl

graduation projects

2025

13.03—26.04.2026

NAJLEPSZE PROJEKTY DYPLOMOWE
z Polski, Czech, Słowacji i Węgier

THE BEST GRADUATION PROJECTS
from Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary

Zamek CIESZYN
Sala Wystawowa, budynek A
ul. Zamkowa 3 abc, Cieszyn

The Castle CIESZYN
Exhibition Room, building A
Zamkowa st. 3 abc, Cieszyn

Wystawie towarzyszą filmy przygotowane
przez tegorocznych laureatów, które można
oglądać od 13 marca do 26 kwietnia 2026 r.
online: www.graduationprojects.eu oraz
FB/graduation.projects.GP

The exhibition is accompanied by films
prepared by this year's winners, which can
be viewed from 13 March to 26 April 2026
online: www.graduationprojects.eu
and FB/graduation.projects.GP